







AUGUST 15 1969

# Looking Back On The Freedom Struggle

In mind—Sir S. P. Sinha and Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee both in his opinion equally able lawyers—he preferred Sinha for his lighter colour, Mukherjee's skin being of the colour of his own silk top-hat. Such were the cramping circumstances under which India's leaders functioned at that time.

The first world war gave India an opportunity to prove her value to Britain in her desperate struggle with Germany, and admirably did she utilise it. The recognition of her services in men and materials brought swift recognition of an altering status, symbolised in her membership of the Imperial War Conference and later, at the end of hostilities, of the League of Nations.

The King, speaking in a new strain in 1921, referred to the Montagu reforms as "the beginnings of Swaraj within my Empire". Montagu himself, inhibited by official restraints from giving all his hopes about a concrete form, nevertheless committed the Cabinet of which he was a member to responsible government in stages. The pace might have appeared too slow to India's leaders and the first instalment grudging and inadequate. But the significant thing to note in a world dominated as it was by colonialism was Britain's acceptance of India, at least in her external status, as an equal of the Dominions and of her recognition as a single entity through the association of the princely States with British provinces in the League of Nations.

## SWIFT CHANGES

The first decade after the world war was, in fact, one of swift change in India marked by concepts of enlarged dimensions: self-determination as a principle

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after 1920 was, even after the 1937 elections, in a conciliatory mood, appealing to Gandhiji to reach "an honourable Hindu-Muslim settlement".

For the Congress, it was a moment of unexpected triumph that called for restraint and generous statesmanship. But Mr. Nehru, who had urged during the election campaign "wrecking the Constitution from within" and opposed acceptance of office suddenly saw new possibilities in the enjoyment of ministerial power. There was to be (he decided) no coalition with the Muslim League in the U.P., despite a pre-election understanding. His mass contact programme was devised to bring the Muslim masses into

By B. Saiva Rao

the Congress. A Constituent Assembly of sovereign status and elected on adult suffrage was to frame a new Constitution acceptable to India without any reference to the British Parliament. Ambitious programmes for the uplift of the peasantry, especially in the zamindari-ridden provinces of Bihar and U.P., alarmed vested interests.

The course of events in India might probably have been different if the prospect of inaugurating the federal part of the 1935 Constitution did not loom immediately ahead. All political groups and interests, including landlords, industrialists and the Princes—who her Hindu or Muslim—pooled their resources for a single purpose: to prevent the Congress from grasping power again after the federal elections scheduled by Lord Linlithgow.

SHRI DINESH MILLS LIMITED, PADRA ROAD, BAROL

IN THIS GANDHI CENTENARY YEAR, LET EACH ONE OF US PLEDGE HIMSELF TO LIGHT AT LEAST ONE TINY LAMP TO DISPEL THE DARKNESS OF IGNORANCE.

is unable at present to find adequate answers. It is distressing to end this article on a note of diffidence about the future. The fact, however, must be faced with all



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OM in my long journalistic career have myself in a position of embarrassment as accepting a strange assignment from Col. Louis Johnson, President Roosevelt's special envoy to New Delhi at the time of the Cripps mission. He had arrived early in April, 1942, just in time to find the Cripps negotiations on the verge of a breakdown. I met him within a few hours of his arrival at Cochin House on Jantar Mantar Road. "Journalists in my country," he said to me wasting no time on formalities, "sometimes play a valuable part from behind the scenes in delicate situations, and this is your opportunity."

He took me into his confidence. America, not Britain (he asserted), was really fighting the Second World War, and an immediate settlement of the Indian problem was essential, in the President's view, for success. "America is anxious," he went on, "to see China and India occupy dominant positions in Asia in the post-war era. The question is whether and how I can help."

I gave Johnson the main details of the crisis which had developed over the defence provisions in the Cripps offer. His immediate intervention, I suggested, was desirable to avert a complete deadlock.

"Can I see Nehru?" he asked me, "at once if possible." Johnson was staying at Viceroy's House with Lord Linlithgow. He offered to go to Nehru's residence, if necessary. That I ruled out as impracticable, with the American flag flying on the bonnet of his car, success would depend on the observance of the utmost secrecy and there would always be journalists hovering round Nehru's house.

For the rest of the time that I was with him, I gave Johnson an account of the Congress leaders' views and general attitude towards the war. Nehru would have been cooperative on the basis of a firm promise of full freedom at the end of the war, and his cooperation might have meant India's active participation in its prosecution.

It was a baffling problem for a man like Nehru, but I was sure that with the support of his colleagues, Sardar Patel and Rajagopalachari, he would have his way, if Churchill could be a little accommodating. Johnson seemed interested in

Washington and Churchill influenced into making a declaration broadly on those lines, if possible before the end of the proceedings at Allahabad.

I worked hard for two days on the suggestion and produced the following draft:

"The Indian Congress has not accepted the view that major changes in the Constitution are not possible during the war. Nevertheless, in order to facilitate a settlement it is prepared to agree to a declaration by the British Cabinet on the following lines: Indian leaders attach the greatest importance to arrange-

# THE OPPORT THAT NEHRU

## B. SHIVA RAO describes the meeting in 1942 when I Congress and President's envoy in Delhi seen promise of early independence

my summing up of the situation. "About two things the President is keen," he said finally: "Will India agree (of course with a settlement that would satisfy Nehru and his friends) never to make a separate peace with Japan ahead of all the other Allies; and, secondly, will the Hindus be just to the Muslims and the Untouchables?"

On both these points I felt I



Col. Louis Johnson

could, without hesitation, indicate Nehru's willingness to agree without any sort of reservations I was not aware of till that morning that President Roosevelt attached such vital importance to India's immediate freedom as part of the grand strategy for winning the war. I felt grateful that it was given to me to bring Johnson and Nehru together. Out of that meeting I felt might emerge a solution of India's difficulties with Roosevelt's help.

From Johnson I went straight

to the last paragraph.

"The Cabinet will accept the decisions of such a body and ask the Viceroy to proceed to the formation of a National Government to replace the present Executive Council. He will discuss with that body the composition and personnel of the National Government which must necessarily include in adequate proportions representatives of the two main political organisations, namely, the Congress and the Muslim League.

"There have been apprehensions expressed in India about the Viceroy's powers of veto. Under the Constitution, he is

Any attempt on the part of anyone to frustrate the Government taking over the management will be a cognizable offence punishable with rigorous imprisonment for a maximum period of two years.

The measure contains provisions for dispensing with the services of an official who will act in a manner prejudicial to the management of the company. The Bill is likely to be published in an extraordinary issue of the Calcutta Gazette tomorrow. Mr S. M. Murshed will be appointed temporarily as administrator in addition to his duties as the Deputy Secretary, Transport.

The first charge on the new administration will be the cost of operation and its depreciation fund. If any money is left after meeting these two charges, the question of payment of dividend and remuneration to directors will arise. There will be no remittances to England. The daily collection of the OTC is said to be about Rs 70,000.

## 3 HIMACHAL M.L.A.s JOIN CONGRESS

From Our Correspondent

SIMLA, July 11.—Three Opposition members of Himachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly, Mr Baburam and Mr Parkash Chand, crossed the floor today and took their seats on the Treasury Benches.

In a joint statement to the Press explaining their decision to join the Congress in the Opposition to give a fair chance to the Government to bring about changes in the administration and to improve the lot of common people, they had been disillusioned.

All went to the non-Congress about two Governments of Punjab and Hariana. Johnsoyana had stopped completely the flow of grain to Himachal and Indian people subjected to great privations. Meanwhile, the statement added that the Congress in Himachal, which had been shouting so loud against the Ministry, had not said a word to condemn the attitude of "our neighbouring Governments".

A premature decision by the Johnson-Nehru MLAs said they had decided to strengthen the hands of the Chief Minister, Dr Parmar, who was working for the stability of the State.

Johnson-Nehru MLAs said they had decided to strengthen the hands of the Chief Minister, Dr Parmar, who was working for the stability of the State.

which this article is taken, will shortly be published in a book titled "India's Freedom Movement: Some Notable Figures".

perguate his council of the Johnson. Some years later when I met Johnson in New York during a session of the U.N. General Assembly, he expressed his firm belief that if only Nehru had accepted his advice and accompanied him to Washington, India's freedom might have been hastened by some years.

both instructive and interesting



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# THE LIBERAL LEAVENING IN INDIA'S STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM

B. SHIVA RAO recalls in an age of political corruption and civil disorder the high standard of personal integrity, unflinching adherence to constitutional methods and gift for diplomacy with which India's Liberal statesmen once enriched public life.

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freedom struggle, outstanding as it was, does not minimise the part played by Sir Tej Baha-lji's firm dur Sapru. Apart from his ingrossment participation in the framing of the Commonwealth of India Bill in 1946, and later of the Nehru report, to him must go the primary honour and credit of having won the ruling about princes over to an all-India Congress federation as the immediate objective of the Round Table Conference. For two weeks on board a P and O ship from Bombay to Marseilles, the daily discussions with the princes brought about a change in the situation that completely altered the schedule of the Round Table Conference.

ROYAL ASSENT

This brings me to a point that is hardly mentioned in accounts of the freedom movement. The States' People's Conference under the leadership of Jawaharlar Nehru, Balwant Rai Mehta, Sheikh Abdullah and others did much, in the formative stages of the Round Table Conferences, to underline the importance of the elective principle in the representation of the princely States at the Federal Centre. But the pioneer in this field was Sir Sivaswamy Aiyar. In a series of lectures to the Madras University in 1928, he referred in a masterly survey to the establishment of proper relations between Indian provinces

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creation of an artificial condition. Included in the list of conditions to be fulfilled by princely States to qualify themselves for accession was the observance of the elective principle. In many respects Sir Sivaswamy Aiyar was a radical in his thinking and outlook. Another great figure who deserves much greater recognition than he has received is Mr Srinivasa Sastri. In his own sphere—the exposition of India's claim to equality of status with the Dominions of the Common-

support of the Congress and of  
 Indian applications. The author  
 covers a wide range of the poli-  
 tical outlook of the period, the  
 Congress programme, Indian  
 general administration, economy,  
 and States, and the view  
 of these subjects, rather too many  
 of the perspective

would disagree that the secret of his success lay in his direction of a revolution which was bound to come and which would break those who refused to bend. This new paperback version, with an introduction by J. E. Neale, only underlines the debt owed to Professor Pollard.







# Kripalani Disputes Maulana Azad's Claim

Acharya J. B. Kripalani has disputed the assertion of the late Maulana Abul Kalam Azad that he was against India's partition and had made it clear to Mahatma Gandhi, reports UNI.

"I do not know what private conference he had with Gandhiji. All I know is that he never opposed it (partition) in the (Congress) Working Committee or the AICC", Mr Kripalani says in his biography of Gandhiji, just released by the Publications Division of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

In the book titled, "Gandhi: His Life and Thought", Acharya Kripalani, who was the Congress President in 1947, describes the account of the events in the Maulana's book "India Wins Freedom" as a "curious mixture of facts and fancies" and says: "It is not a question of correcting a passage here and there. It would require a volume as big as he had written to correct all his misstatements and misconceptions".

Mr Kripalani speaks of a personal letter written by the Maulana to the Cabinet mission saying, "He would be agreeable and would carry the working committee with him" not to insist on including a Muslim in the national Cabinet.

The Working Committee, Acharya Kripalani writes, was not aware of this personal letter and it was strange that the Maulana should have written to the mission without the committee's knowledge. When Gandhiji asked the Maulana about it, he flatly denied having done so, the author adds.

## COMMUNAL CONFLICTS

Acharya Kripalani refers to Gandhiji's reactions to communal conflicts and observes that the Mahatma could think "only in terms of martyrdom" and had a "fascination for the Cross".

According to him, Gandhiji had by then lost the respect he had commanded for years from the Congress. The author quotes him as saying that "Jawaharlal Nehru at least tries to understand me though he may not follow my advice, but Vallabhbhai (Patel) thinks that I have become old and lost grip over reality".

In fact, Gandhiji's words carried little weight with leaders. Even Sardar Patel's secretary at the time refused to see him when he had asked for a meeting to discuss the accommodation arrangements to be made for refugees from Bahawalpur, Acharya Kripalani writes.

The author quotes Mr Nehru as having said at a Working Committee meeting soon after Independence that the historical role of the Congress was finished with Independence.

Acharya Kripalani gives several instances where scant courtesy was shown to the Congress President and Gandhiji.

He says that when the draft Independence Bill was discussed in a conference before it was passed by the British Parliament, the party chief was not called to participate.

He asserts that the Cripps Mission had failed because the Linlithgow Government was opposed to any real transfer of power. This and other events had proved that it was not the authorities in England but the men on the spot in India that had to decide India's fate.

## MOUNTBATTEN'S PLAN

Narrating the proceedings of the Congress Working Committee on June 4, 1947, at which the Mountbatten's partition plan was accepted, Mr Kripalani says the only CWC member who voted against the decision was Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan who felt that such a division of India would let down the Muslims and cause their ruin.

"Maulana Azad and other Muslim leaders were also a party to the decision", he says. "I feel if

along with Ghaffar Khan they had also stood up against Partition, it might not have taken place. But they were always obsessed with the idea of self-determination for the Muslims".

Acharya Kripalani says the Mountbatten plan was accepted by the Working Committee "without much discussion". Mr Nehru and Sardar Patel were already committed to its acceptance and there was no critical examination.

The plan had "many inconsistencies favouring the Muslim League"—in Sind where there was a League Ministry, the accession to Pakistan was left to the Assembly to decide whereas in the North-West Frontier Province, which had a Congress Ministry,



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Such in brief was the situation in India at the commencement of World War II. Gandhi's first reaction on the outbreak of hostilities was in favour of the Congress Party offering unconditional support to Britain and her Allies. But his lieutenants in the Working Committee could not accept that advice without appearing to be inconsistent with their previous stand.

With the Congress Ministries going out of office in seven provinces after October, 1939, Mr Jinnah, always a shrewd tactician, took full advantage of the situation. In March, 1940, he got the League to command the establishment of independent, sovereign zones in the north-east and north-west of India, which the Muslims could claim as their homelands, in view of their being a majority of the population. Any concession to the Congress, he warned the British, would be regarded by the Muslim League as an unfriendly act. That suited the Churchill Cabinet's standstill policy towards India admirably.

The concept of a separate State of Pakistan thus began to take shape. The resolution of the League in 1940 stated certain basic principles for the framing of a Constitution: geographically contiguous units were to be demarcated into regions to be so constituted (with suitable territorial readjustments) that the areas in which the Muslims were numerically in a majority should be grouped to constitute "Independent States" in which the constituent units should be autonomous and sovereign.

Secondly, "adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards were to be specifically provided in the Constitution for minorities in these units". Reciprocally, in other parts of India where the Muslims were in a minority, safeguards of the same kind were to be inserted in the Constitution for their protection and that of the other minorities. An important proviso was added that before the final assumption of authority by the respective regions, transitory arrangements would be necessary for defence, external affairs, communications, Customs, etc.

#### LEAGUE'S MANDATE

The resolution was interpreted by Mr Jinnah and by Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan in different ways. The former was clear in his mind that the League's resolution implied the establishment of a separate State or States; while Sir Sikandar read into it no more meaning than the concession of maximum autonomy to regions in which Muslims formed a majority of the population.

Informal efforts were made in private on several occasions for a settlement between the Congress and a section of the League led by Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan who was equally anxious to avert a partition of the country. (These negotiations were discussed by me in some detail in an article in *The Statesman* of August 15, 1966.) Other possibilities were also being explored at that time with Gandhi's knowledge and full approval. He was attracted by the suggestion of a war-time federal government, especially as I had reasons to believe from personal discussions with Sir V. T. Krishnamachari (Dewan of Baroda) and Sir Mirza Ismail (Dewan of Jaipur) that the progressive States might favourably consider such a constitutional advance.

A section of the Congress Working Committee was willing to proceed on these lines; but the negotiations could not proceed further in the absence of a positive response from the British side.

In March-April, 1942, came the Churchill Cabinet's scheme—known in India as the Cripps Offer—for the solution of the Indian problem, it failed to evoke a favourable response from Indian leaders. After three weeks of negotiations, Sir Stafford Cripps returned to London to report failure to the Churchill Cabinet. The breakdown was undoubtedly one of the greatest disasters of the war in Asia; Gandhi's reaction to the Cripps offer, and, in particular, to self-determination for provinces unwilling to enter the all-India federation was violently hostile—he described it as "poisonous" and "mischievous".

At the Allahabad meeting of the AICC at the end of April, 1942, which came after the failure of the Cripps mission, Rajaji urged the acceptance of the principle of Pakistan, provided that the Muslim League would, as a reciprocal gesture, join the Congress in a joint demand for complete independence.

With the adoption of the "Quit India" resolution by the AICC early in August, 1942, and the subsequent detention of all the Congress leaders and thousands of the rank and file, a period of political stagnation descended on India. The stalemate continued all through 1943 until Gandhi's release from detention in 1944.

Gandhi resumed negotiations with Mr Jinnah after lengthy discussions with Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Rajaji and Mr Bhulabhai Desai at Sevagram in July-August, 1944. In Gandhi's mind the acceptance of the principle of self-determination for Muslim areas was vitally linked up with the formation of a national government for the interim period. He wished that Mr Jinnah should associate himself with a demand for (a) the immediate declaration of independence to become operative as soon as the war terminated; (b) the formation of a real national government except for a reservation in regard to defence, and (c) the release of Congress leaders.

So far as Gandhi was concerned, he was not in favour of two completely separate sovereign and independent States, according to Mr Jinnah's conception. In agreeing to the Rajagopalachari formula he seemed to have relied on the promise contained in the phrases "common arrangements between the two areas in regard to defence, commerce, communications etc." and "a common central administration however loosely knit".

#### ADULT VOTE

The Gandhi-Jinnah talks in Bombay produced no positive results. But Gandhi made his own position clear. Modifying in some respects Rajaji's formula for an understanding with the Muslim League, he wrote to Mr Jinnah on September 24, 1944, accepting the principle of separation for areas demarcated by a Commission approved by the Congress and the

wishes of the inhabitants of these areas were to be ascertained through the votes of the adult population or through some equivalent method. If the vote was in favour of separation, these areas would form a separate State as soon as possible after India was free from foreign domination and could be constituted into two sovereign independent States.

But, added Gandhi, there shall be a treaty of separation which should also provide for the efficient and satisfactory administration of foreign affairs, defence, internal communication, customs, commerce and the like, which must necessarily continue to be matters of common interest between the contracting parties. The treaty shall also contain terms for safeguarding the rights of minorities in the two States (my italics).



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# ONE CENTRE OR TWO

Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru's comments on Gandhiji's attitude at this time are of interest. After his discussions at Sevagram he wrote to Sir B. N. Rau.

"I had two long interviews with Mahatma Gandhi, I told him that it was hopeless to establish a national government responsible to the Legislature during the war and that therefore he might accept my formula of a national government consisting of representatives of all parties, who would not be liable to be dismissed by the Legislature during the interim period but would technically be responsible to the Crown: which meant that the power of Parliament and the Secretary of State would continue during the interim period. He was prepared to agree to the principle of self-determination on democratic grounds; but I do not think he would be prepared to go further than the formula of Rajagopalachari.

"Ultimately the whole matter resolves itself into two questions: (1) Is there going to be one Centre or would there be two Centres? Assuming that Jinnah insists on two Centres, what is go-

Nahar Singh.  
Witness could not say how many bullets hit the driver of the car. Dr Jaswant Singh said that he first saw the front seat of the car and then looked at the rear seat and recognized Mr Kairon. The defence counsel asked: You

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# FAILURE OF CRIPPS A BLOW TO INDIAN UNITY

## CONGRESS ERRORS ENCOURAGED LEAGUE'S SEPARATISM

By B. SHIVA RAO

**R**ECORDS of developments in India in the thirties throw a good deal of light on the genesis of the Pakistan movement. In 1934, Sir Reginald Craddock, a member of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the Government of India Bill, asked a Muslim deputation led by Mr A. Yusuf Ali to comment on the scheme for the establishment of Pakistan. Mr Yusuf Ali dismissed it with contempt as "a student's scheme, which no responsible people had put forward". Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan (also a member of the Committee) told his colleague "we consider it chimerical and impracticable".

The growth of the Pakistan cult was phenomenal after the first General Election in 1937, and in three swift years the political scene in India underwent a radical transformation.

A new Viceroy (Lord Linlithgow) had come out to India, entrusted with the task of bringing the new Constitution into operation. It was to be in two stages: first the provincial part, to be followed a year or two later, after the completion of the necessary preliminaries (mainly the accession of a minimum number of the princely States), by the all-India federal structure. In New Delhi and Simla the prevalent impression in the pre-election year was that the Congress, after being in the wilderness for some years, would fail to capture power and authority in a majority of the provinces in the elections.

The verdict of the electorate in 1937 completely upset all estimates, with the Congress emerging as the largest party in seven provinces out of 11 with a clear majority in six.

### PUNJAB AND BENGAL

In Punjab it was the Unionist Party—not the Muslim League—under Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan's leadership which secured a majority; his Cabinet consisted of six Ministers—three Muslims, two Hindus and a Sikh. In Bengal, Mr Fazlul Huq, the leader of the Praja Party, came to the fore with a strong tenants' programme. His plea for the abolition of the Permanent Settlement and the release of political prisoners and detenus brought his party much Congress support before and during the elections.

In one or two provinces, notably in the U.P., the unexpected success of the Congress Party at the polls was due, in great measure, to the solid support of the peasantry. Immediately after the elections Mr Nehru claimed that the results had proved that the Congress had won their confidence in the U.P. Their hopes for a better life had been raised by Mr Nehru's socialist programme. Socialists and Communists, taking advantage of a Congress Ministry in office, campaigned in the rural areas, preaching radical doctrines.

On the other hand, the performance of the Muslim League was disappointing: of 482 Muslim seats in all the provincial legislatures, only 109 were captured by League candidates. In Punjab, many Muslim candidates preferred the platform of the Unionist Party and in Bengal the Praja Party's programme proved more attractive. In the U.P. a number of Muslim landlords declined the offer of

Mr B. Shiva Rao, one of the participants in a conference on the partition of India that is to be held under the auspices of the School of Oriental and African Studies in London next week, draws upon his private papers to discuss in this article the events that led to the rejection of the Cripps offer which he describes as "undoubtedly one of the greatest disasters of the war in Asia".

the Muslim League to contest the elections as its representatives.

At that stage Mr Jinnah's thoughts were not in the direction of Pakistan. In a public statement shortly after the elections in 1937 he declared: "Nobody will welcome an honourable settlement between the Hindus and the Muslims more than I, and nobody will be more ready to help it"; and he followed it with a public appeal to Gandhiji to tackle this question. The latter's response was somewhat depressing: "I wish I could do something, but I am utterly helpless. My faith in unity is bright as ever; only I see no daylight but impenetrable darkness and in such distress I cry out to God for light."

The general effect of the Congress victories at the polls was noticeable on the princes. Apprehensive of a similar outcome later in the federal elections, they looked for possible allies outside their ranks. Even Hindu princes, resentful of the agitation for popular reforms in the States, became markedly sympathetic to the Muslim League. I remember an occasion late in 1937 when the Jam Sahib of Nawanganar told me, in discussing the prospects of an alliance between the Muslim League and the Chamber of Princes for the federal elections: "Why should we (the princes) not support the League? Mr Jinnah is willing to tolerate our existence, but Mr Nehru wants the extinction of the princely order."

But the main factor in the three years following the General Election of 1937 which gave vitality to the Pakistan movement was operative in the U.P. and, to a lesser extent, in Bihar. Until the elections and promises between the Congress and prominent Muslim leaders in the U.P. were generally cordial. The Congress Party in the U.P. was working on the assumption that a decisive majority could be ruled out, had reached an understanding with the Muslim League. This facilitated a working

arrangement between the two organizations during the elections in a number of constituencies.

### SURPRISE RESULTS

If the Congress leaders had adhered to their pre-election intention of forming a coalition Ministry, the Hindu-Muslim problem might not have assumed formidable dimensions. The official forecast had given the Congress about 70 seats out of a total of 228, while Congress leaders themselves did not hope to win more than 100. Actually, however, the party secured 135 seats and could form a party Ministry. The right to form a single party Government was held to be the verdict of the electorate; and a coalition, it was argued by Mr Nehru and his associates, could not "wreck the Constitution from within"—the avowed object of the Left wing of the Congress.

Muslim leaders in the U.P. regarded it as a violation of the electoral understanding. As an additional complication came Mr Nehru's "mass contact programme" to win over the Muslim masses to the Congress creed. Muslims even outside the U.P. felt that the League's existence was being threatened; and in a series of by-elections in Muslim constituencies in the U.P., the results showed that Mr Nehru had committed a serious tactical error.

The defeat of the Congress candidates in these by-elections had a visible psychological effect all over India. Other parties, which had been defeated in the elections, saw in the Muslim League a rallying point for a combined opposition to the Congress in preparation for the all-India federation. Landlords, fearful of the Congress agrarian programme, turned to the League for indirect assistance and, in return, gave it support.

### LEFTIST LEANINGS

The Congress in the U.P. reflected, perhaps more than elsewhere, Left-wing leanings. The Premier, Pandit Pant, could not curb without serious misunderstanding, a campaign for a socialist programme initiated by some of his own supporters. And the liberty which Left-wingers in the Congress claimed for themselves could not be denied to Muslim League organizers who made full use of their opportunities for their own programme.

A significant consequence of mass support for the Muslim League was that at the end of 1937, the League, following the example set by the Congress 10 years earlier, adopted complete independence as its creed.

Right up to the commencement of World War II, and even in its early stages, Gandhiji was

anxious not to embarrass Britain, but to secure, if possible, an honourable settlement. With the Congress, the Muslim League and the princes pulling in different directions, the Viceroy found it increasingly difficult to chalk out a clear policy to ensure the introduction of the federal part of the new Constitution as originally scheduled, a year or 18 months after the inauguration of provincial autonomy.



nal Congress, 1885.

# r that gress

ing in his paper *Bandemataram* roused the militant youth to rebel, escaped to the French territory of Pondicherry abjuring the political path altogether? Too baffling for us to understand. The aura of his greatness was to touch my generation much later. But the man who could command both young and old, whose majesty towered over everyone else around him was Chittaranjan Das. I had seen him from a distance only twice. He was a terror for the Raj while he differed with Gandhiji's boycott of the legislature and had his way; he had a brilliant team which harassed the British sahibs by their exposure within the assembly chamber, while he himself was like the affectionate guardian of the young revolutionaries maligned by the British as terrorists.

Deshbandhu as he came to be called in his lifetime, suddenly died at the point — of triumph in distant Darjeeling. Even we in our early teens were stunned and the words of Rabindranath Tagore addressed to that warrior dead still ring in my ears— "You had brought with you a fearless life, and in death you have left it behind as your bequest."

All this was part of the grandeur that was the Congress.



# Jotting

by Nikhil C

WITH the Rajiv Gandhi celebrations of the political that became for achieving of India. We true that the eventful journey of changes — from time to true that by tory and trad which Rajiv ay can legit the rightful organisation the beginnings in lishman to p

At the same invidious to the Congress party in the term. It has form and it the English-e gathered to 100 years from different diverse outl mon desire—the running ministration.

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In those fame of th over the co used to be Lala Lajpat Gangadhar and Bipin C gal:

Of these a boy abou one—Bipin vidly remer powerful sp was at Giridih in rents used vacation. ady passe ory, for on to libera Gandhiji to a boy I wa power of h day, we w



## Notings

by Nikhil Chakravarty

WITH massive fanfare the Congress under Rajiv Gandhi has begun the celebrations of the centenary of the political organisation that became the instrument for achieving the independence of India. While it is no doubt true that the Congress in its eventful journey through a hundred years has undergone many changes — transforming itself from time to time—it is equally true that by all canons of history and tradition the party over which Rajiv Gandhi presides today can legitimately claim to be the rightful inheritor of the organisation that had its modest beginnings in 1885 with an Englishman to preside over it.

At the same time it would be invidious to ignore the fact that the Congress has never been a party in the strict sense of the term. It has always been a platform and it is so today. When the English-educated Indian elite gathered to form the Congress 100 years ago, it had persons from different walks of life with diverse outlooks, but one common desire—to have a share in the running of the country's administration.

By the turn of the century, the Congress moved from small beginnings to more wider preoccupations. The British raj decided to partition the key province of Bengal, the center of power and at the same time the seat of militant activities attracting the revolutionary youth pledged to freeing the country. And so there came the unprecedented upsurge of the anti-partition movement which threw up many leaders, most of them powerful orators, while down below at the mass level, new stirrings could be discerned.

In those days, the name and fame of three leaders spread all over the country. Together they used to be called Lal-Bal-Pal — Lala Lajpat Rai of Punjab, Bal Gangadhar Tilak of Bombay and Bipin Chandra Pal of Bengal.

Of these three, I have seen as a boy about to enter school only one—Bipin Chandra Pal. I vividly remember him making a powerful speech in English. That was at a small place called Giridih in Bihar where my parents used to take us during the vacation. By then, he had already passed the peak of his glory, for Bipin Pal had moved on to liberal politics by the time Gandhiji took over. And yet as a boy I was awe-struck by the power of his oration. In his heyday, we were told, Bipin Pal



NEW STIRRINGS: Delegates to the first session of the Indian National Congress, 1885.

# The grandeur that was the Congress

coined picturesque sayings as part of the campaign to shake up his countrymen. One of these was that if every 70 Indians decided to spit on one Englishman continuously, the British would be forced to quit our country. What he was trying to convey was the strength of the Indian nation, which if awakened could chase a handful of foreigners away from our country.

Another celebrated war-horse of my boyhood days was Surendra Nath Banerjee. I saw him in the evening of his life, a fiery nationalist — earning the nickname of "Surender Not"—turned liberal offering "responsive cooperation" to the British Raj. I saw him only once at a meeting but I proudly cherished a copy of his autobiography aptly titled *A Nation in the Making*, which I got as a prize for standing first in history in the school. And I was proud of my school too, the Hindu School, the oldest in Calcutta.

Bipin Chandra Pal and Surendra Nath Banerjee were of course respected figures in a nationalist youth's pantheon in those days. But they were not our heroes. Although the Hindu School was a prestigious government school, both students and teachers—at least most of them—were seeped in the lore of

the freedom struggle. The day I first saw the picture of Khudiram Bose, I could hardly sleep: a young boy of my age with those piercing eyes defying death, threw a bomb at the white sahib and mounted the gallows, undeterred and unruffled.

## The Spell Of Swadeshi

Mine was not a Congress family but the spell of Swadeshi was all pervasive. My father, a gentle soul keeping to his books as he taught English to generations of pupils in government colleges, would at times burst into song and one of his favourites was by Tagore, "*Sarthak janam amar janmechi eideshe*" ("Blessed is my life that I am born in this land"). That was the song which had been immortalised by Ullaskar as the hangman put the noose round his neck. He was one of the comrades of Aurobindo Ghosh in the Alipur bomb case. Legends were woven round those heroes of our schooldays—how a revolver had been smuggled inside a pumpkin and past the prison sentries to do away with a person who had turned a police informer.

For our young minds, Aurobindo remained a mystery: why this inspiring leader whose writ-

ing in his paper *Bandemataram* roused the militant youth to rebel, escaped to the French territory of Pondicherry abjuring the political path altogether? Too baffling for us to understand. The aura of his greatness was to touch my generation much later.

But the man who could command both young and old, whose majesty towered over everyone else around him was Chittaranjan Das. I had seen him from a distance only twice. He was a terror for the Raj while he differed with Gandhiji's boycott of the legislature and had his way; he had a brilliant team which harassed the British sahibs by their exposure within the assembly chamber, while he himself was like the affectionate guardian of the young revolutionaries maligned by the British as terrorists.

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All this was part of the grandeur that was the Congress.



# The Raj Vocabulary

They always maligned militant revolutionaries as terrorists and the term stuck. Many Indians almost unthinkingly used the term to denote those whom they otherwise held in high esteem.

## Jottings

by Nikhil Chakravartty

THESE days, the term "terrorist" has become part of our political vocabulary and both the government and political parties have been using it uninhibitedly. Yet it would be good to remind ourselves that very often imperial powers brand freedom-fighters as terrorists. The US administration and its protegee, Israel, have all the time been describing Palestinian freedom-fighters as terrorists.

If we go back to our own history, the British raj always used to malign militant revolutionaries as terrorists. And the term stuck. Many Indians almost unthinkingly used the term to denote those whom otherwise they held in high esteem. This brings me to my boyhood days when so-called terrorism was a major item of national politics.

In 1929, after doing my matriculation examination, I came to Delhi to spend my holidays with a doctor aunt of mine. As part of the sightseeing I was promised a visit to the Central Assembly, as it used to be called in those days, to watch the proceedings.



A DEATH-DEFYING PATRIOTISM: Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt.

Some friends of my aunt were to arrange to take me to the visitors' gallery after the lunch break. It was housed in the same building as the present Parliament House. As I was about to get ready a relative of ours drove in agitatedly and said that two terrorists had thrown bombs into the chamber and there was no question of my visiting the Central Assembly; rather my aunt and other relatives feared that I being a Bengali boy might be picked up in the police hunt.

So, the very same evening, I was packed off to my grandmother at Patiala. As extra precaution, I was not to travel in a dhoti but in a pair of khaki shorts. In their innocence, my relatives did not know that many of the terrorists themselves often used to wear khaki shorts which also helped them in their swift action.

The incident electrified the entire nation. At Patiala, I used to read *The Hindustan Times*

which as the only nationalist English daily in the capital those days, used to give extensive coverage to the trial of Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt. Their lawyer was the Congress barrister Asaf Ali, whose picture was also carried in *The Hindustan Times*.

Like the term "terrorist", another one in the raj vocabulary of those days was "outrage". Any militant attack on even the smallest emblem of British power or its carrier would be publicised as an outrage. And so, the assembly bomb attack was a terrible outrage, and it was implicated with the earlier attack on a white police superintendent of Lahore, Saunders by Bhagat Singh who had escaped. Bhagat Singh shot Saunders because it was he who had ordered the attack on the Congress protest demonstration against the Simon Commission, which had resulted in the death of Lala Lajpat Rai.

And so came the Lahore conspiracy case. I was by college student in Calcutta. I vividly remember how revolutionaries in Lahore prison on hunger-strike demanded special treatment as political prisoners. After more than two of non-stop refusal of a — a record in human history — borne out of sheer will one of Bhagat Singh's comrades, Jatin Das, passed away when his body was brought to Calcutta, the whole city to come out onto the streets. Men and women, young and old with grief writ large on their faces converged to pay tribute to this martyr for freedom was more precious.

## His Comrades

Years later, when two communist movements, Ajoy Ghosh and Shiv Verma dropped other day when I was in for a feast, my mind went back to those memorable days when patriotism by such death-defying comrades.

Nowadays, scholars with across graveled spectacles coldly dissecting the revolutionaries, understand that such sacrifice generated by their fathers in the school of freedom. Many of them sturdy patriots taken to the same might not be steeped in their death but to free our motherland from bondage.

In the making of the Indian nation, the soft earth and the hard rock; and as I look back I cannot help feeling that the superb majesty of our free struggle will never come into view for the generation born after independence if we fail to take a narrow view of its different streams.

Going back to the so-called terrorists, these jottings cannot have out many other episodes which I treasure as my heritage from those heroic times. If the editor permits, I shall come back to them in the weeks ahead.

It is not a temple for ritual and worship. Among the modern electronic gadgetry pressed into the service of explaining eternal truths will be a computer.

by K. P. Balakrishnan

WHEN a young man said to an engineer-turned-sadhu, Swami Atmaswarupdas of the Akshar Purushottam temple at Shahibag, Ahmedabad: "Swamiji, let me make it clear at the outset ... I have come to your temple only for your delicious prasad. I am not interested in your temple or its idols," no wonder the sadhus of the Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Sanstha, led by their 65-year-old chief Sri Pramukh Swami, felt perturbed.

Had all their temples in Kenya, Uganda, the U.K. and the

U.S. failed to carry conviction with their flock? Was there a need for something different that would make the foreign-based Gujarati Hindus conscious of their heritage?

It set them thinking and the answer came — a Rs. 5 crore cultural complex at Akshardham, in Gandhinagar, Gujarat, that would harmonise traditional style carvings with modern gadgetry, including computer controls to acquaint visitors with ancient India's cultural and scientific achievements.

Even as we walked along the corridors of the massive edifice which will be thrown open in October 1985 to coincide with the bicentenary celebrations of Swami Gunatitanand, principal devotee of the movement's founder, Lord Swaminarayan, the youthful swami explained, "It is exactly such people we had in view when Pramukh Swami turned the first sod in May 1979 to start work on this cultural complex."

It is not a temple for rituals and worship. Its aim is to carry the message of "sarva dharma samabhava" (unity of all religions) and "Vasudeva kutumbakam" (The world is one family). Symbols depicting Christianity, Islam and other religions will be depicted. Among the modern elec-

tronic gadgetry pressed into the service of explaining eternal truths will be a computer into which will be fed solutions to modern youth's troubled minds.

The foreign-bred Gujarati Hindus have increasingly come under the influence of the itinerant jet-age sadhus of the "sanstha" with the largest number of temples abroad. The sadhus are drawn partly from the Indians in those countries who have listened to the discourses of Pramukh Swami and his predecessor, Sri Yogiji Maharaj. The two have been commuting to the West for the past 35 years.

## Workaholic Sadhus

In fact the young sadhus of the movement are used to modern concepts like the trident submarine and use them liberally to impress on their followers the need to give up sloppy work habits and adopt rigid schedules.

The sadhus are at the same time quite orthodox in their own way. Sri Yogiji Maharaj (chief in the 1950s) hit the headlines in the press when the Air-India planes by which he travelled with his band of sadhus took special care to keep away air hostesses from their view. But this is certainly not to be taken as an anti-

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# The

Myths take hold of the truth. The belief that the Indians for freedom independent do not want. The truth was, hand, the British two world wars people became right to freedom. Gandhi's leadership and the harial, exposes intentions.

by B. R. Nand

## INCREDIBLE

I seem, Gandhi's contribution to the politics of India is being Paul Johnson, a British, a former editor of *New Statesman*, as misleading. Gandhi was responsible for the British decision to that decision had taken before he began.

Sir Algernon, author of a monograph on politics during the claims that "it was a gimmick which led to withdrawal, but the end of the British rule in 1947."

If the British government in India had liquidated the Indian political stage, they would have been successful in keeping for there is no evidence of an intention even in the records of the end.

In the last quarter of the century, the leadership had lost the day when would become a dominion within a empire.

To the educated took an interest in was axiomatic that Indian self-government the gradual development of the state, with members and larger political parties seemed an impossible task. Lord Dufferin, viceroyalty the founded, frankly the ability of constitution in a conquered such as self-govern-



# The British had no plan to

Myths take hold in the absence of careful investigation of the truth. One such myth has been the belief that the British had always been preparing India for freedom and planning to make it an independent dominion like Canada and Australia. The truth was more complicated. On the one hand, the British power was enfeebled by the two world wars and, on the other, the Indian people became increasingly conscious of their right to freedom and assertive under Mahatma Gandhi's leadership. B. R. Nanda, biographer of Gandhiji and the two Nehrus, Motilal and Jawaharlal, exposes the myth regarding Britain's good intentions.

by B. R. Nanda

**I**NCREIBLE as it may seem, Gandhi's contribution to the political liberation of India is being questioned. Paul Johnson, a British journalist, a former editor of the *New Statesman*, asserts that "it is misleading to suggest that Gandhi was responsible for the British decision to leave India, that decision had already been taken before he began his campaign."

Sir Algernon Rumbold, the author of a monograph on Indian politics during the years 1915-22, claims that "it was not Gandhi's gimmicks which led to the British withdrawal, but the declaration of 20 August 1917 foreshadowed the end of the British empire."

If the British government or its agents in India had decided to liquidate the Indian empire before the advent of Gandhi on the political stage, they were remarkably successful in keeping it a secret, for there is no evidence of such an intention even in their confidential records and correspondence.

In the last quarter of the 19th century, the leaders of Indian nationalism had looked forward to the day when their country would become a self-governing dominion within the British empire.

To the educated Indians who took an interest in politics, it was axiomatic that the road to Indian self-government lay through the gradual development of legislatures, with more elected members and larger powers. To British politicians and officials this seemed an impossible proposition. Lord Dufferin, during whose viceroyalty the Congress was founded, frankly doubted the feasibility of constitutional reforms in a conquered country "in as much as self-government and sub-

mission to a foreign sovereign are incompatible terms."

The stark truth was that at the turn of the century India was the linchpin of the commercial and defensive organisation of the empire with which no ministry in Britain could dare to tinker. These were the days when imperialism was not a dirty word, and British statesmen could speak frankly about what Britain gained from the Indian connection.

Lord Curzon, speaking in 1909 as an ex-viceroy at Edinburgh, asserted that India was not merely a "magnificent jewelled pendant, hanging from the imperial collar, capable of being detached therefrom without making any particular difference to its symmetry or strength", but "the strategic centre of imperial defence, the granary of Britain, the source of plantation labour for the colonies, and of raw materials for the home industries, and an outlet for British capital and manufactures and a training ground for young Britons in the arts of peace and war".

It was only natural that the talk of constitutional reforms and self-government should have disconcerted the British rulers. George Hamilton, the secretary of state for India, was of the opinion that the principle of racial equality between Europeans and Indians should never have found a mention in Queen Victoria's Proclamation of 1858.

The introduction of the English legal system, literary education, competitive examinations and a free press in India — all these seemed to him in retrospect a series of blunders.

The agitation against the Illbert Bill in the early 1880s had revealed the width of the gulf between the ruling race and the people of India. An attempt by Lord Ripon's government to rectify some anomalies in the

trial of Europeans by Indian judges, nearly provoked a "white mutiny". Seton-Kerr, a former foreign secretary to the Government of India, declared that the Illbert Bill outraged the "cherished conviction which was shared by every Englishman in India from the highest to the lowest, by the planter's assistant in his lowly bungalow, and the editor in the full light of the presidency towns — from these to the chief commissioner in charge of an important province and to the viceroy on his throne — the conviction in every man that he belongs to a race whom God had destined to govern and subdue."

Most British officials disputed the right of the rising class of educated Indians to speak for the masses. They saw no need to appease this class, which was in any case a "microscopic minority". "The real guarantees of our stay in India", Lord Lamington, the governor of Bombay, wrote, "remain as strong as ever viz., the caste system, the diversity of nationalities and creeds and the lack of confidence and trust of one native for another." "We must realise", B. Fuller, a former member of the ICS and a retired governor, wrote in 1910, "that we are foreigners in this country and a foreign government in the nature of things cannot command much popular sympathy." R. H. Craddock, the chief commissioner of the Central Provinces, later, the home member of the Government of India, wanted to put a stop to all talk of parliamentary government for India. "There was no question of India being on a par with British dominions at any time", he wrote, "the National Congress must either drop its colonial (dominion) swaraj creed or cease to exist... How long are we to listen to this nonsense about swaraj on the colonial system, which is an impossible ideal?... Any toying with these people is toying with criminals and rebels."

It is not surprising that the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909 fell far short of the hopes of Indian nationalists. John Morley, the Liberal secretary of state for India, ruled out parliamentary institutions for India. He was assured by the viceroy, Lord Minto, that what galled the educated Indian was not the humiliation of foreign subjection, but the frustration of personal ambition; a judicious distribution of more and better-paid jobs could, therefore, turn malcontents into loyal adherents!

The British bureaucrats in Simla and London used all their skill to concede as little as possible, and to hedge, what was conceded, with safeguards for the raj. The elections to the "reformed" legislatures were indirect except in the case of the Muslims and the landlords. Of the 27 elected members of the Imperial Legislative Councils, 13



Historians may differ or liquidate their Indian empire at any time before nationalist movement.

were elected by non-official members of the provincial legislative councils, six by Muslims and two by chambers of commerce. The franchise was narrow. For example, only eight electors chose the Muslim representative from Bombay.

The reforms were the handiwork of a Liberal government, but they belied the hopes of the most moderate of Indian nationalists. The truth was that neither the leadership nor the rank and file of the British Liberal party were prepared for a radical change in India.

The attitude of the Liberal and Conservative parties towards India did not really differ in fundamentals. They were all for strong and impartial government, for justice between Indian and Indian and even between Indian and Briton. The Liberals were perhaps more willing than the Conservatives to agree to the widening of the base of the legis-



# o free India



the exact date on which the British decided to  
pire, but it certainly was not in 1917, nor in  
e Gandhiji assumed leadership of the Indian

latures or to the appointment of  
Indians to a few high executive  
posts, but their object was not  
to transfer power to Indian hands  
but merely to provide safety-valves  
for political discontent. To a  
generation, which bitterly disputed  
the Irish claim that Ireland  
was a nation, self-government for  
India could hardly make sense.

real self-government, with practical  
freedom from (British) parlia-  
mentary control upon a race  
which is not our own... is one  
which could be tried." In the  
same year, in a confidential  
minute circulated to the members  
of his executive council, the vic-  
roy, Lord Hardinge, wrote:

Whatever may be the future  
political development of India,  
colonial self-government on the  
lines of British dominions is  
absolutely out of the question.  
We have undertaken the serious  
and difficult task of guiding the  
destinies of India and of devel-  
oping her civilization. Our task  
is not yet half-completed; and  
having put our hands to the  
plough, we cannot turn back.  
The pace has been quite fast  
enough of late — it would be  
wicked to accelerate it at the  
present moment.

To Hardinge, a non-official  
majority in his legislative council  
was inconceivable. "Once we have

a non-official majority in the vic-  
roy's legislative council", he wrote,  
"the Viceroy had better pack up  
his traps and leave the country.  
His position would be lacking in  
dignity."

Hardinge and Crewe echoed the  
thoughts not only of the British  
policy-makers in London and  
Simla, but of the whole of Anglo-  
India. The proposal to appoint  
Sir S. P. Sinha, an Indian to the  
Viceroy's Executive Council (which  
Minto-Morley initiated, with Minto's  
concurrence) met with fierce op-  
position. Every member of the  
Viceroy's Executive Council, ex-  
cept one, was against it.

Neither the British govern-  
ment nor the Government of  
India had any intention of mak-  
ing a further move after the  
Minto-Morley reforms. But the  
outbreak of the first world war  
created a new situation; the eco-  
nomic and political ferment gen-  
erated by the way could not be  
ignored. The Home Rule move-  
ment launched in 1916 by Tilak  
and Mrs. Besant made a swift  
and strong impression on the  
country. Mrs. Besant set up a  
branch of her Home Rule League  
in England. The comment of  
The Times was characteristic:

We have received copies of a  
leaflet... by an obscure agency  
calling itself "Home Rule for  
India League", which appears  
to have opened offices in Lon-  
don. The most ominous feature  
is concisely in the declaration  
that "the Government of In-  
dia must cease to be foreign  
and must become Indian". A  
movement of this kind need  
not perhaps be taken serious-  
ly. Cranky people in this coun-  
try do many mad things, but  
surely the maddest is to en-  
courage a Home Rule agitation  
in India.

The home member of the  
Government of India, Sir Reginald  
Craddock, who was responsible  
for law and order in the country,  
described Mrs. Besant as "a vain  
old lady influenced by a passion-  
ate desire to be a leader of move-  
ments." Before long the govern-  
ment's reaction changed from de-  
rision to bewilderment, and from  
bewilderment to alarm. The ob-  
jective of the home rulers, self-  
government for India within the  
British empire, may seem modest  
today, but in 1916 it alarmed the  
authorities. The movement deep-  
ly stirred the western-educated  
classes and students; in some pro-  
vinces it affected the country-  
side. "Sedition in India", Craddock  
warned, "is like the tides which  
erode a coastline as the sea en-  
croaches... We must have our  
dam in order lest it inundate  
sound land."

The projected dam against the  
seditions flood was a declaration  
of British policy towards India.  
In a series of "clear-the-line" tele-  
grams the Viceroy, Lord Chelms-  
ford, urged the secretary of state,  
Sir Austen Chamberlain, to hasten  
an announcement by His Maj-  
esty's Government on post-war  
constitutional and administrative  
changes in India, so as to win  
over "the influential, though  
timid, unorganised and compara-  
tively inarticulate body of opinion  
which is opposed to and afraid

of any sudden and violent  
in the constitution."

The British cabinet was  
preoccupied with the con-  
war to spare much time  
niceties of the constitution  
rangements in India.  
George, the Prime Minister  
ed Curzon, a member of  
cabinet and an ex-viceroy,  
a hand in drafting the de-  
of British policy the te-  
which were being telegra-  
discussed by the Govern-  
India and the secretary of

On 14 August 1917 suc-  
matter was discussed  
net, Curzon explained  
tions to the word  
ment", because Ind-  
expect it to happen  
generation, "while  
probably contemplated  
vening period which n-  
to 500 years." He, the  
forward his alternat-  
about "the full realisation  
sponsible government, coop-

Six days later, Edw-  
who had recently suc-  
ten Chamberlain as in K-  
state for India, read And-  
awaited declaration in  
of Commons "that the ha-  
His Majesty's Govern-  
dia was that of increas-  
ciation of Indians in  
of the administration, child-  
development of self-g-  
stitutions with a vi-  
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sible government in  
integral part of the  
pire."

## Raised Hopes

The declaration was  
tically received in In-  
raised hopes of the es-  
of a Westminster style  
in India, it was not  
those who had drafted  
certainly not of Curzon  
suggested that with all  
ed mastery of the En-  
guage, Curzon may be  
"responsible government"  
only "government by  
men", and not "an ex-  
sponsible to the legis-

Peter Robb, the hide-  
Chelmsford's viceroy  
that the responsible ge-  
promised in 1917 mean-  
the devolution of self-g-  
upon the provinces but  
enduring British Centra-  
ment; neither full freed-  
single Indian dominion  
saged."

Edwin Montagu sur-  
the British dilemma  
recorded in his diary on  
ember 1917 that he was  
his "brains as to how I  
to get something which  
accept and the House  
mons will allow me to  
out whittling it down."

Historians may differ  
exact date on which the  
decided to liquidate the  
empire, but it certainly  
in 1917, nor indeed, at a  
before Gandhiji assumed  
dership of the Indian na-  
movement.

Excerpts from "Gandhi  
Critics" by B. R. Nanda  
Rs. 85)

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# he quest didn't lead him

his lifetime Gandhi was variously labelled: a Sanatanist (orthodox) Hindu, a Buddhist, a Theosophist, a Christian and "a Christian-Mohammedan". He was all these and more; he saw an underlying unity in the clash of doctrines and forms.

Concluding excerpts from B. R. Nanda's "Gandhi And His Critics".

GANDHI'S critics have had a field day, sneering at his "saintliness" and his pursuit of "personal holiness, at the expense of public good." We are told that he was "a Hindu of Hindus," that his religious ideas are of little real relevance to the world of to-day.

What is the truth in this ure of Gandhi? What kind religion did he profess and ise? And what effect did ve on his public life?

ously enough, though i grew up in Porbandar ajkot in western India in ut Hindu household steep- Vaishnavism and was ex- to strong Jain influences, quaintance with religion, ith the religion of his was of the meagrest, 1888 at the age of 19 yed in London to study la was with some embar- rt that he confessed to s English theosophist friends. wited him to read Sir Ed Arnold's *The Song Ce*, that he had never read the *gavad Gita* in Sanskrit, or in Gujarati, his mother tonj

Th was his introduction to a b which was to become his ritual reference book." Anot book of Sir Edwin's, *The t of Asia*, also fascinat- ted the story of the Buddi life, renunciation and teachi stirred him to his depths

Whit the literature of the Theosocal Society was quick- ening ndhi's interest in reli- gion, aellow vegetarian enthu- siast induced him to the Bible. The New Testament, particula the Sermon on the Mount, ent straight to the young Gdhi's heart.

The tehings of the Bible, the Buddi and Bhatt (a Guja- rati poet) fused in the young Gandhi's mind. Though idea of returning ove for hatred and good for evil captivated him, he did not comprehend it fully, but it continued to fer- ment in his impressionable mind. Before he eft England in 1891, he had already outgrown the phase of atheism into which he ad strayed in early adolescence.

During his first year in South Africa in 1893, Gandhi came across some ardent Quakers, who perceived his religious bent, and decided to annex him to Christianity. They loaded him with books on Christian theol- ogy and history; they preach- ed to him, and prayed with him and for him. Finally, they took him to a Protestant con- vention in the hope that mass emotion would sweep him off his feet. It appeared to Gandhi's Christian friends that he had

been on the brink of conver- sion, but, for some unknown reasons, had stepped back.

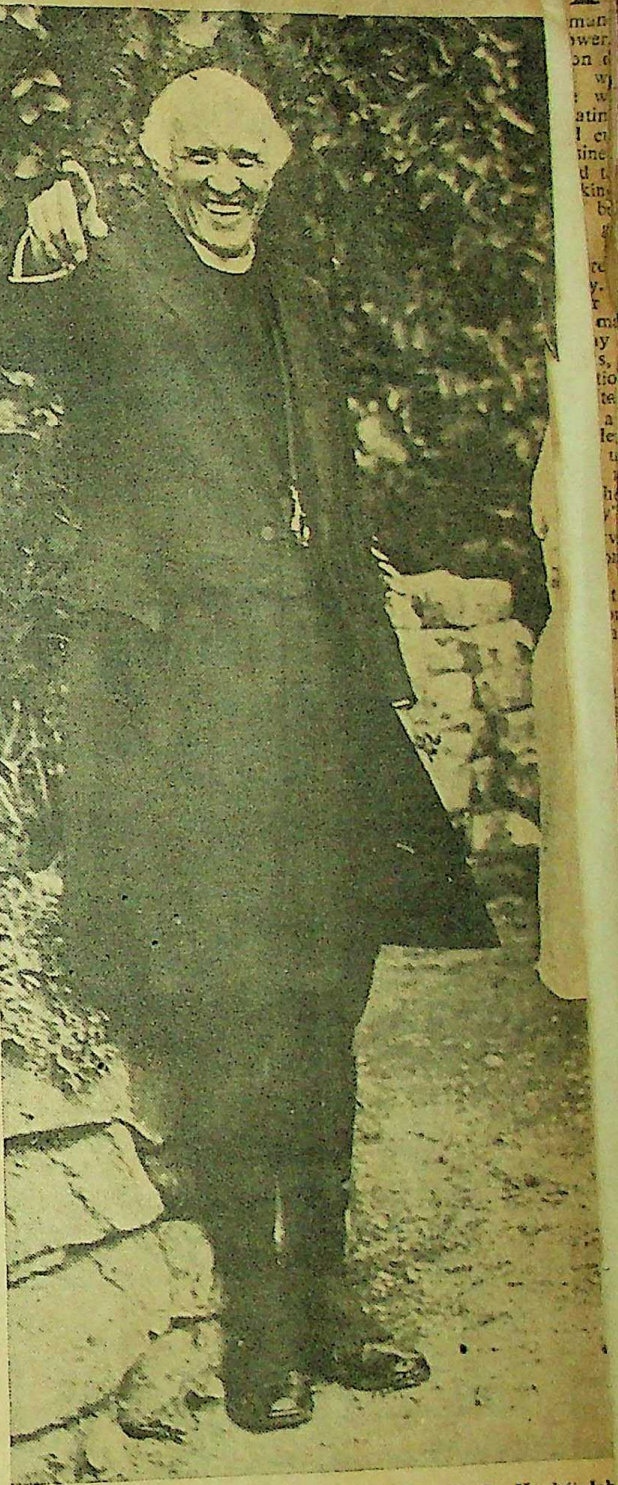
The first impact of Quaker proselytising in a strange country was doubtless strong on him, but he was in no great hurry to be- come a Christian in Pretoria than he had been to become a Theosophist in London. His knowledge of Hinduism was yet superficial. While books on Christianity and Islam were easily available in South Africa, he had to send for books on Hinduism from India. He sought the advice of his friend and mentor, Raychandbhai, a Jain savant of Bombay, who coun- selled him to be patient and to seek in Hinduism "its unique subtlety and profundity of thought, its vision of the soul and its clarity." His scholarly exposition reinforced Gandhi's own sentimental bond with the religion of his birth..

Years later, Gandhi confided to a group of Christian mis- sionaries: "Hinduism as I know it entirely satisfies my soul, fills my whole being and I find a solace in the *Bhagavad Gita* which I miss even in the Ser- mon on the Mount." He did not, however, accept every Hindu

For most politicians, politics is a game which they must play and play to win; what is expedient takes prece- dence over what is moral. Tilak, the most influential nationalist leader in India at the time, told Gandhi in 1918: "Politics are not for Sadhus".

tenet or practice. He applied the "acid test of reason" to every formula of every religion. When scriptural sanction was cited for inhumane or unjust practices, his reason was one of frank disbelief. The oft-quoted text, "for women there can be no freedom," ascribed to Manu, the ancient Hindu law-giver, he regarded as an interpolation, and if not, then he could only say that in Manu's time women did not receive the status they deserved. Similarly, he lashed out against orthodox Hindus who supported untouchability with verses from the vedas. "Every living faith," he wrote, "must have within itself the power of rejuvenation".

Gandhi's Hinduism was ulti- mately reduced to a few funda-



DAYS OF THE RAJ: Mahatma Gandhi with Dr. Hewlett Joh

mental beliefs: the supreme rea- lity of God, the unity of al life and the value of love (ahimsa) as a means of realising God. In this bedrock religion there was no scope for exclu- siveness or narrowness...

The study of comparative re- ligion, the browsing on the the- ological works, the conversations and correspondence with the learned, brought Gandhi to the conclusion that true religion was more a matter of the heart than of the intellect, and that genuine beliefs were those which were literally lived... Gandhi's first biographer, the Reverend J. J. Doke, wrote in 1909 that Gandhi's views were too closely allied to Christianity to be en- tirely Hindu; and too deeply

saturated with Hinduism to be called Christian, "while his sympathies are so wide and Catholic that one would ima- gine he has reached a poin where the formula of sects are meaningless."

In his lifetime Gandhi was variously labelled: a Sanatanist (orthodox) Hindu, a renegade Hindu, a Buddhist, a Theoso- phist, a Christian and "a Chris- tian-Mohammedan". He was all these and more; he saw an underlying unity in the clash of doctrines and forms. He chided Christian missionaries for their "irreligious gamble" for con- verts... The missionaries' bid to save souls struck him as pre- sumptuous...

Gandhi's religious quest did



# to a cave in the Himalayas



nson, then dean of Canterbury.

not lead him—as sometimes happens in India—to a cave in the Himalayas. He did not know, he said, any religion apart from human activity; the spiritual law did not work in a vacuum, but expressed itself through the ordinary activities of life. This aspiration to relate the spirit, not the forms of religion to the problems of everyday life runs like a thread through Gandhi's career.

M.R. Gandhi's religious and moral views are, I believe, admirable and indeed are on a remarkably high altitude," wrote Reading, soon after his first meeting with the Mahatma. "but I must confess that I find it difficult to understand his practice of them in politics..."

Much of the confusion arose from the fact that Gandhi's concept of religion had little in common with what commonly passes for organised religion: dogmas, rituals, superstition and bigotry. Shorn of these accretions, Gandhi's religion was simply an ethical framework for the conduct of daily life.

Many people, who are prepared to concede the value of an ethical framework in domestic and social spheres, question its feasibility in politics, which are proverbially "the art of the possible". For most politicians politics is a game which they must play, and play to win; what is expedient takes precedence over what is moral. Tilak, the most influential nationalist leader in India at the time, told Gandhi in 1918: "Politics are not for sadhus (holy men)."

Curiously enough, it was Gokhale, the moderate leader, whom Gandhi hailed as his "political mentor", who first talked of "spiritualising politics"... For centuries, India had her hands of sanyasins who had turned their backs upon worldly ambitions, and consecrated themselves to the service of God and men. Gokhale wondered whether this reserve of self-sacrifice could be tapped for the social and political regeneration of the country.

This idea of "spiritualising politics", of evoking abnegation and self-denial for secular causes, which inspired Gokhale to establish the Servants of India Society, also appealed to Gandhi: he applied it to the various ashrams he set up in South Africa and India. But he went further, and extended the application of this idea to the political field. Satyagraha, his method of resolving conflicts, drew its dynamic from his deeply held religious and philosophical beliefs, which were not exclusively Hindu. He acknowledged his debt not only to the Gita and the Upanishads, but to the Sermon on the Mount, and the writings of Tolstoy and Thoreau.

For Gandhi satyagraha was a way of life, but to many of those in the Congress party, whom he led, it was just a method for waging the battle against the Raj. This divergence of approach between Gandhi and his following came out at critical junctures. In February 1922, when he decided not to proceed with mass civil disobedience after receiving the news of the Chauri-Chaura riot, many of his colleagues protested that his emphasis on non-violence was overdone. In March 1931, his decision to call off civil disobedience and to attend a Round Table Conference in London came as a shock to his radical colleagues, especially to Jawaharlal Nehru. "There comes a stage," Gandhi said, "when a satyagrahi may no longer refuse to negotiate with his opponent. His object is always to convert his opponent by love." This talk of converting the enemy through love ruffled the "realists" in his party; satyagraha seemed to have ethical and religious overtones which grated on their ears.

Gandhi's use of such words as "swaraj" (self-government), "sarvodaya" (uplift of all), "ahimsa" (non-violence) and "satyagraha" was exploited by the Muslim League to estrange Muslims from the nationalist

struggle. The fact is that these expressions when used by Gandhi had little religious significance. They were derived from Sanskrit, but since most of the Indian languages are derived from Sanskrit, this made them more easily intelligible to the masses...

The protagonists of Pakistan made much play with the phrase "ram rajya" which Gandhi occasionally employed to describe the goal of the Indian freedom struggle. This was Gandhi's equivalent for the English term "utopia". Gandhi was employing (what Prof. Morris-Jones has aptly described) the "saintly idiom"; the masses whom he addressed instinctively knew that he was not referring to the monarchial form of government described in the ancient epic Ramayana, but to an ideal polity, free from inequality, injustice and exploitation.

It is a remarkable fact that Gandhi adapted traditional ideas and symbols to modern needs, and transformed them in the process. He transmuted the centuries-old idea of an ashram as a

... The resolution on fundamental rights, which the Karachi session of the Indian National Congress passed in 1931, with Gandhi's cordial approval, avowed the principle of religious freedom and adequate protection for minorities; it declared that the "state shall observe neutrality in regard to all religions." This doctrine was embodied in the constitution of independent India even after the Muslim League waged and won the campaign for the partition of the country on the basis of religion...

Those who charged Gandhi with importing religion into politics pointed to his fasts as an example of this aberration. They questioned the ethics of fasting as a political tactic. Were Gandhi's fasts not a form of moral coercion? Did they not detract from rational discussion of complex issues? C. F. Andrews, the Christian missionary, who was a friend of both Gandhi and Tagore, once wrote to the Mahatma from England: "I hardly think you realise how very strong here is the moral repulsion against

Many people, who are prepared to concede the values of an ethical framework in domestic and social spheres, question its feasibility in politics, which are proverbially "the art of the possible."

haven from worldly life for pursuit of personal salvation; his ashrams at Sabarmati, and Sevagram were not merely places for spiritual seeking, but offered training in social service, rural uplift, elementary education, removal of untouchability and the practice of non-violence.

Prayer meetings have been a part of the daily life of the people in India from times immemorial... These congregations are, however, sectarian affairs. Gandhi turned his prayer meetings, which were held not in a temple, but under the open sky, into a symbol of religious harmony by including recitations from Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Parsi and Buddhist texts. When the prayers and hymns had been recited, he spoke on the problems which faced the country. In the last months of his life, at a time of bitter religious controversy, his prayer meetings became a defiant symbol of tolerance, and his post-prayer talk served the purpose of a daily press conference.

Thus the symbols used by Gandhi in his political campaigns had ceased to be exclusively Hindu symbols. The "saintly idiom" remained, but its content had changed; this is something which often escaped the attention of Gandhi's critics. One of them, M. N. Roy, who in his communist as well as Radical Humanist phases, had been sharply critical of Gandhi's religious approach to politics, confessed later that he had failed to detect the secular approach of the Mahatma beneath the religious terminology and that essentially Gandhi's message had been "moral, humanist, cosmopolitan."

Deeply religious as he was, Gandhi said that he would have opposed any proposal for a state religion, even if the whole population of India had professed the same religion. He looked upon religion as a "personal matter"

fasting unto death. I confess as a Christian I should do it, and it is only with the greatest difficulty that I find myself able to justify it under any circumstances."

Even though fasting had a place in the religious life of the Hindus for centuries, Gandhi's genius lay in creatively using it as a tool for social action. He described fasting as the "most potent of the weapons" in his armoury of satyagraha. But he also described it as "a fiery weapon", to be used sparingly, and as a last resort, when all other avenues of redress had been closed. However, he took care to use it against those who admired and loved him, never against his opponents. He did not, for example, fast to compel the Muslim League to give up its demand for Pakistan. He fasted to awaken the conscience of the Hindu community against untouchability, and to bring rioting mobs back to sanity.

We learn from Jawaharlal Nehru's autobiography that his first reaction to Gandhi's fast in jail in September 1932 was one of anger at his "religious and sentimental approach to a political question." And yet, a few days later, when there was an upsurge in the country against untouchability, Nehru could not help feeling "what a magician... was this little man sitting in Yeravada Prison and how well he knew to pull the strings that move people's hearts."

Of Gandhi's capacity to pull strings in the human heart, the greatest examples were to come in the last month of his life in the wake of the communal disturbances which proceeded and followed the partition of the country.

"GANDHI AND HIS CRITICS"  
by B. R. Nanda (OUP, Rs. 85)

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भारतीय स्टेट बैंक

ou feel at all guilty, I first came  
disaster for Mr. Pro-  
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guilty. I'll tell you  
guilt. When the Daily  
caught up with me in  
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Women political pri-  
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भारतीय

CC-0. Bhagavad Ramanuja National Research Institute, Melukote Collection



# “Mr. Gandhi has crosse

An idea of the official hostility to Gandhiji may be formed from a telegram sent by Sir William Vincent, the home member, to the moderate leader Surendranath Banerjee in which he described Gandhi as having "put himself entirely beyond the pale."

by B. R. Nanda

**L**ORD Curzon, who had taken a hand in drafting the declaration of 1917, thought it would take India 500 years to qualify for self-government. In 1906 Dadabhai Naoroji, the most venerated Indian politician of the day, exhorted Indian nationalists to persevere in the face of difficulties. "The Irish have been struggling for 800 years", he wrote, "and here they are struggling all the same!" A few years later S. P. Sinha, a brilliant lawyer and the first Indian member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, estimated that India would become a dominion in 300 years.

The emergence of Gandhi on the political stage in 1919 upset all these calculations of British statesmen and Indian leaders. He remained the dominant factor in Indian politics for the next three decades; his confrontation with imperialism was to culminate in its liquidation not only in India but in the rest of the world. The final result was, however, obvious neither to the British nor to the Indians, while the struggle lasted.

Gandhi's emergence as the leading actor on the political stage was a phenomenon which was as bewildering to the Indian political elite of the day as it was to the British authorities. He had returned to India early in 1915 after 20 years' absence in South Africa. For the first few years he seemed to be on the periphery of nationalist politics, strangely out of tune with the leaders of the day.

In 1917 he struck Edwin Montagu, the Secretary of State for India, as "a social reformer with a real desire to find grievances and to cure them, not for any reasons of self-advertisement, but to improve the conditions of his fellowmen. He dresses like a coolie, forswears all personal advancement, lives practically on the air and is a pure visionary."

This image of a starry-eyed idealist was strengthened by Gandhi's studied abstention from the home rule movement on the plea that it was wrong to embarrass Britain while she was engaged in a life-and-death struggle during the world war. His

and brought back by Bombay. The disturbances in Bombay, Ahmedabad and other places provoked by his arrest, however, forced the government to retrace their steps. Gandhi himself was taken aback by the popular reaction to his arrest in his home province and helped in restoring peace quickly. Meanwhile, a terrible tragedy had been enacted at Amritsar and martial law proclaimed in the Punjab. Lord Chelmsford's government had burnt its fingers in the initial stage of Gandhi's Row-

broadside against the materialistic civilization of the West and the use of English as a medium of instruction in Indian schools grated on the ears of the Indian educated classes, who had learnt to admire English literature, English history and English politics.

In the Indian National Congress Gandhi found himself out of sympathy with both the moderate and extremist factions. What dismayed him was their virtual insulation from rural India, where 90 per cent of the population lived. Both the parties shared the belief that the game of politics could best be played in town-halls and council chambers by the educated, especially the western-educated, classes. What really divided Gandhi from parties and politicians in the homeland was his South African experience. Among the discoveries he had made in the course of those 20-odd years was that constitutional politics for a subject people had definite limits.

He realised that a political contest was a conflict not merely of arguments, but of interests, that a stage could be reached when something more than reasoning was required to redress injustice and to shake off oppression. In South Africa he had evolved his method of satyagraha, of non-violent resistance as an alternative to the use of force. It was as the author and practitioner of this method that he was to come into a head-on collision with the British Raj.

## Reforming Zeal

During the first world war, both Gandhi and the government of India seemed to be consciously trying to avoid a confrontation. Hardinge had taken a hand, at the instance of Gokhale, in resolving the deadlock between Gandhi and Smuts in the final phase of the South African struggle. High British officials in the Government of India seemed to be aware that Gandhi was not a man to be trifled with. They took pains to answer his letters and, when necessary, to explain things to him in person. They hoped that his reforming zeal would drain off in the innocuous channels of religious and social reform. Some of them may even have hoped to

attitude of the government to the Punjab tragedy and the Turkish peace treaty, were added to the Rowlatt laws. By the end of 1920 it was a straight fight for "swaraj" (self-government) for India. Gandhi called for "Swaraj within a year", constitutional reforms doled out in instalments were no longer acceptable. This demand seemed wholly unrealistic to the British rulers of India. The declaration of 1917 had never been intended as a promise of self-government in the



A MISSION OF PEACE: In 1931 Gandhiji was in

enlist him as an ally, if he cast in his lot with the moderates.

But they soon discovered that he was much too independent, candid and unpredictable for their taste. He seemed to them capable of conjuring a crisis out of nowhere. He could draw the masses like a magnet, he could make high dignitaries look foolish. Even while he criticised the acts of British officials, he claimed to be their friend. After his arrival in Champaran district in Bihar in 1917 had triggered a first class agrarian crisis between the European indigo planters and their Indian tenants. Gandhi wrote to the local magistrate that:

My mission is totally of peace. The government machinery is designedly slow. It moves along the line of least resistance. Reformers like myself who have no other axe to grind, but that of reform they are handling for the time being, specialise and create a force which the government must reckon with.

The Government of India went some way towards placating

Gandhi on the crisis in Champaran, and on such non-controversial subjects as the emigration of indentured labour to the British colonies. But they did not accept his claim that he was a disinterested bridge-builder between the people and an irresponsible executive. They did not like his intervention on behalf of the Ali Brothers, who had been interned for their Pan-Islamist sympathies, or on behalf of the drought-stricken peasants in Gujarat, who were pleading for remission of land revenue.

The attitude of the government of India towards Gandhi changed when he denounced the Rowlatt Bills. Lord Chelmsford's reaction to Gandhi's satyagraha was to "call him into prison." The government thought of punishing him into prison. In April 1919 Sir George Gordon, the governor of Bombay, viceroy at Kalka, discussed a proposal with Gandhi along with political leaders. The idea of the official, Witha by Gandhi may be for Babyl.

It was only natural for the British to try to rally all those who were bound to them by the ties of self-interest—the princes, the landlords, the titled gentry, the religious minorities. It was also inevitable that when Gandhi launched civil disobedience in 1919-22, 1930-31 or, in 1940-42, the government used all its resources for the repression of the movement.

Excerpt from "Gandhi And His Critics" by B. R. Nanda (OUP, Rs. 85)



ynastic rule implies a  
nstitution that ex-  
cludes any other kind  
of succession. Yet Ali  
confirms that Nehru  
had no interest in ar-  
ranging for Indira's suc-  
cession.

N. J. Nanporia

is immediately evident that  
this is a rush job because  
pages 15 to 46 are inadvertently  
omitted. But this apart it is a  
very professional accomplish-  
ment. Completed, it is said, in  
days, though marred by the  
author's apparent inability to  
revison or modify his Marxist  
views.

These presumably must be  
the presumption which  
underpins the entire book: that  
the elevation of Gandhi to his  
present post is in the nature of  
dynastic succession. "Dynasty"  
a word which begs the ques-  
tion and is emotively charged.  
It has been much bandied about  
by those who wish to insinuate  
a strange point that despite  
his many free general elec-  
tions it has been undemocratic  
in the choice of its prime  
ministers.

Dynasty, according to the dic-  
tionary, is "a succession of rulers  
of the same line or family"  
and is more a description of  
a family than a definition of  
a dynasty. Dynastic rule implies a  
constitution or convention which  
excludes any other kind of suc-  
cession but the story Ali  
gives us documents the  
fate of a family  
in firm control of its  
country, often frustrated in its  
career, as often compel-  
ling compromise, and repeat-  
edly obliged to respond to the  
pressure of public opinion.  
As any account of his  
life must show, and which Ali  
does, was seriously at odds  
with some of his colleagues and  
congress as a party; and at  
once described himself as  
"outsider" and "alien" in

quotes chapter and verse  
to affirm that Nehru had no  
interest in arranging for Indira's  
succession or in promoting her  
political advancement; and it is  
that Ali gives no credence  
to the legend that Nehru pulled  
her behind the scenes to  
do something which he  
repudiated. Referring to  
the guard "king makers" in  
congress Ali again confirms  
they were, indeed, "bosses"  
in a particular field of man-

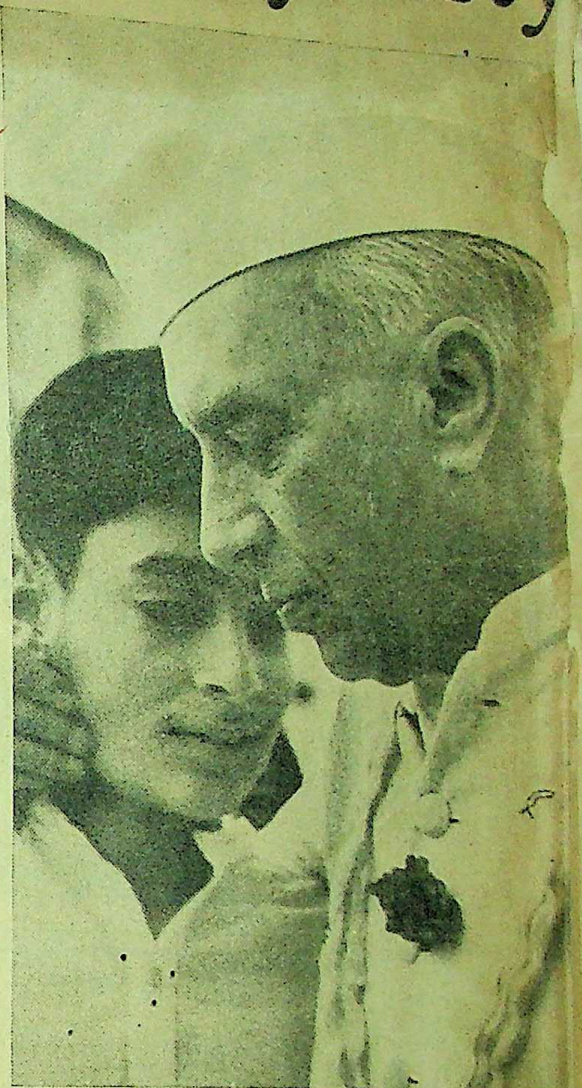
# This is no dynasty

oeuvre, for whom Nehru had  
contempt but whose wishes he  
could not wholly ignore.

Indira, in turn, owed her  
succession not to any dynastic  
ambitions or arrangements but  
to "party bosses" who "needed  
someone pliable." In the event  
she outplayed them to the  
point of splitting the party, and  
Ali makes the very pertinent  
comment that whereas Nehru  
"had not needed to dirty his  
hands in the everyday mess of  
politics" Indira had no such  
advantage. In short she had to  
fight every inch of the way, with  
people in the party, as Ali de-  
scribes it, waiting with sharpened  
knives to stab her in the back.  
Then came the JP movement,  
the Allahabad judgment, the  
emergency, the 1977 election,  
Janata rule and Indira's restora-  
tion. On all these developments  
Ali's version is refreshingly out-  
side the conventional mode of  
interpreting them in terms of  
a clash between angels and de-  
mons; which is to say that it is  
as objective an account as can  
be found anywhere of events  
only too liable to be distorted  
by partisan fallibility. He de-  
scribes the JP movement as  
"bogus"; Indira's electoral of-  
fence and the charges against  
her as "minor" and "trivial" and  
clearly takes a dim view of  
JP's call to the police and army  
not to obey "unlawful" orders.

All of which are hardly the  
sort of things that happen to  
anyone in the convenient grip  
of a dynastic determinism. Nor,  
if there had been a dynasty at  
work, would Sanjay's "extra con-  
stitutional" interventions have  
been necessary or the author  
have occasion to remark approv-  
ingly on the "resiliency" of  
Indian political institutions. Ali's  
description of the electoral re-  
jections of Indira and the Janata  
is one of the best things in this  
book, wholly without ideologi-  
cal bias and the attitudinising  
indignation the subject all too  
often engenders among the self-  
appointed guardians of demo-  
cracy in India. Ali is happily free  
of such complexes and allows  
that a great deal of Sanjay's ex-  
cesses owed more to his "ob-  
session with speed" than to  
anything so diabolical as an  
incipient fascism. Similarly, he  
says flatly that Indira's opponent  
in the 1977 election was a "buf-  
foon" but that if the Janata had  
put up a parrot it would have  
won at a time when Indira's  
stock was low.

Further, he believes that Indira  
expected the Congress to lose



A CHOSEN DYNASTY: If an electorate freely endorses a dy-  
nasty is the dynasty a dynasty and are the people guilty of perpet-  
uating it?

the election, seeing this is an  
escape from her emergency com-  
mitments, and that when she  
claimed that defeat provided her  
with relief from the "burden of  
responsibility" this was not "a  
complete fabrication". There is  
here evidence of a subtler un-  
derstanding of Indira's character  
and motivations than anything to  
be found in the Indian accounts

of the period. But where in all  
this political turmoil, caused by  
the intermingling of conflicting  
forces, is there anything to sub-  
stantiate the thesis that a dy-  
nasty was at work or was being ar-  
ranged?

Indira was so unsure of herself  
that the emergency and Sanjay's  
elevation to power were defensive  
moves to counter a powerful

The Nehrus And The Gandhis : By Tariq Ali (Picador  
£ 2.50)

est man in India and to V. C.  
Shukla as a deeply cultured man.  
Yet overall what we have is an  
impressive tour de force in which  
in effect the author argues  
against his own preconception  
and unintentionally defeats it.  
If the reader ignores the intro-  
duction which is easy to do and  
separates Ali's narrative from  
his insistence on seeing feudal-  
ism everywhere there is much  
that is stimulating in this look  
at contemporary history. As, for  
example, his curious implication  
that Rajiv would not be where  
he is if it had not been for the  
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electorate, illiterate or not, freely  
endorses a dynasty is the dy-  
nasty a dynasty and are the people  
in it guilty of perpetuating it?



# The Sheikh's Story

Sheikh Abdullah was 25 when he burst upon the political stage of Kashmir like a tornado. Then on he influenced events in the state in a way that for almost 50 years, whether in jail or outside it, has few parallels.

by N. L. Chowla

I ARRIVED in Srinagar in the beginning of February 1964 to take over as director of Radio Kashmir, a post which I held for nearly six years. By the time I reached Srinagar the holy relic—the Prophet's hair—which had suddenly disappeared from the shrine of Hazratbal had been restored. The weeping and wailing for the recovery of the holy relic had ended but a new phase of political convulsions had just begun.

A decade of Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad's rule had also come to a close. His place as prime minister of Jammu and Kashmir had been taken over by one of his own men Shams-ad-Din. The Government of India was engaged in a serious appraisal of the situation in the state which resulted in a major political and administrative shake-up. Towards the end of February G. M. Sadiq was sworn in as the new prime minister of the state.

The two most gripping experiences of my stay in Kashmir were the entry of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah into the valley after his release on April 8, 1964 and the Indo-Pak war of 1965, following large-scale armed infiltration from across the ceasefire line. Seemingly, the two events have nothing in common

but inasmuch as they provided a deeper understanding of the Kashmir situation they left a retentive imprint on me. They were also symbolic of two distinct realities in the situation. The emotional and tumultuous welcome given to the Sheikh by the people of the valley established, beyond all description, the charisma of his personality and the hold he had over the people. The 1965 war, on the other hand, finally tore up any argument concerning the state being an integral part of India. The two events thus, to my mind, determined the course of developments in Kashmir and, in relation to the emerging situation, in the entire sub-continent.

During those years Radio Kashmir was the most sensitive medium of information in the valley and beyond. It was to play a role of crucial significance during the war, countering the propaganda barrage from the other side and building up the morale of the people in resisting sabotage by the armed infiltrators. My job gave me a unique opportunity to closely study events as well as to personally come into contact with the principal participants in this historic phase. Apart from Sadiq, Qasim and Dhar whose confidence I think I enjoyed, I came into contact with Sheikh Abdullah and maintained a link till

my constitution as a democratic model.

The subject of elections is considered in the third lecture, and judicial review is considered at some length in the fourth lecture. The fifth lecture has its focus on the independence of the judiciary, while the sixth and concluding lecture offers some suggestions for better securing the democratic system adopted by our founding fathers.

In point of substance, some of the lectures offer considerable reading material and have the advantage of collecting at one place matter which is not

a few weeks before his death. It is with this background that I consider the book a faithful account of the recent history of Kashmir.

Written by R. N. Kaul, a former professor of English literature who had also been associated with the freedom movement in the state, the book makes absorbing reading. The author calls it a biography of Sheikh Abdullah and a "humble contribution towards the goal of secularism as a way of life." He calls the Sheikh a jewel of Soura, a village on the outskirts of the city of Srinagar where he was born on December 5, 1905.

Sheikh Abdullah was 25 when, as the author says, he burst upon the political stage of Kashmir like a tornado. Then on, for nearly 50 years, whether in jail (he spent a total of 15 years, seven months and five days in detention) or outside, in power or agitating for the cause, Sheikh Abdullah influenced events concerning the state for which there are few parallels. The book focusses on the Sheikh's singular contribution to the building of a secular social and political order in the state.

As a secular leader of Kashmir, Sheikh Abdullah made his debut on March 28, 1938 with a statement. Addressing a huge gathering of labourers he said: "We must end communalism by ceasing to think in terms of Muslims and non-Muslims when discussing our political problems.... We must open our door to all such Hindus and Sikhs, who like ourselves, believe in the freedom of their country from the shackles of an irresponsible rule." This statement gave an entirely new turn to the political movement in the valley.

The Muslim Conference of which the Sheikh had become an

SECULAR IMAGE: Sheikh A

unquestioned leader was converted into the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference on June 11, 1939. This was the beginning of the political movement in Kashmir closely aligned to the freedom movement in British India under the banner of the Indian National Congress. The very first session of the National Conference demanded that members to the legislature be elected on the principles of adult franchise and

on page 27, Aristotle referred to on page 2, Solon quoted on page 4, and Nehru quoted on page 16 from his introduction to a book on the Constituent Assembly).

The utility of the book would have been enhanced had proper editorial assistance been sought. Even so, the book puts before us a new point of view on a theme partly unexplored.

**We Have A Republic : Can We Keep It? : By P. Jagan Mohan Reddy (Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati, Price Not Stated)**



**A PRICE WE MUST PAY: Democracy must be preserved at all costs.**



# The nation is alive

## Message Of Elections '84

Rajiv Gandhi's and the Congress party's unexpectedly massive victory in the recent elections is by definition a momentous event. It is, therefore, only natural that political commentators should seek to interpret its significance in terms of what it represents and what it portends. Rajendra Mathur's article below is one such effort as was Arun Shourie's last week.

A risk is implicit in such commentaries which in a sense are exercises in instant history. But the risk is unavoidable. Journalism demands instant judgment. It can be tempered, and indeed is tempered in the case of some of the more experienced commentators, by an awareness that often things are not what they seem and knowledge, even if cursory, of history. So appropriately Rajendra Mathur seeks to place the 1984 poll in the context of three previous ones — 1971,

## The nation i

Continued from Page I

sult was that the woman who was a child of the 1967 furies, who on many occasions had launched mammoth operations to hold those furies in check, and who was sometimes accused of keeping them alive, was ultimately felled by them. There was a Greek tragedy's inevitability about her death, and with her going an era has surely come to an end.

What about Rajiv Gandhi? Should we presume that the consensus which the Indian voters have been urging since 1971 would now find a habitat? And if we try to reevaluate the Nehru era in the light of what happened between 1967 and 1984, do we not arrive at the conclusion that politics in his time was not an after-glow of the British Empire? It was indeed the dawn of our freedom, and as truly Indian as any other period since or before. The Ganga of consensus which flowed in his time was not an imitation Thames. It was our own mainstream, and the years have proved that there can be no other. In fact the Ganga, ever

eager to descend, was bet 1971-84 in search of a hear across which it could Would it find one now?

And how would the oppos go about reconstructing it Before 1967, when the divi were vertical rather than hori tal, the opposition parties to confront us with five p options. There were the partie the Left who argued either favour of (1) communism democratic socialism. They were the parties of the Rig of which wanted (3) our n lism to be based on tra Hinduism, and the other (4) our economic growth fuelled by a healthy cap uninhibited by the restricti a quota-permit-licence Raj democratic socialists often

The 1984 vote is o mation of Indian n affirmation of the consensus.

SCIENCE

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- ☐ Staring to sleep
- ☐ Storing the sun's energy

## THE STRONG SEX

Male chauvinist agree. But even that the female species is strong male. A classic Stephen Jay Go columnist.



ne is where I perform. My country is the dancing, Rudolf Nure-London Coliseum. Significant in Romeo and Juliet at the In 1977, I saw Rudolf Nu-

the male dancer, along with ly, his choreography glorified b

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# 'Mr. Gandhi has crossed the

An idea of the official hostility to Gandhiji may be formed from a telegram sent by Sir William Curzon, the home member, to the moderate leader Surendranath Banerjee in which he described Gandhi as having "put himself entirely beyond the pale."

by B. R. Nanda

LORD Curzon, who had taken a hand in drafting the declaration of 1917, thought it would take India 500 years to qualify for self-government. In 1906 Dadabhai Naoroji, the most venerated Indian politician of the day, exhorted Indian nationalists to persevere in the face of difficulties. "The Irish have been struggling for 800 years", he wrote, "and here they are struggling all the same!" A few years later S. P. Sinha, a brilliant lawyer and the first Indian member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, estimated that India would become a dominion in 300 years.

The emergence of Gandhi on the political stage in 1919 upset all these calculations of British statesmen and Indian leaders. He remained the dominant factor in Indian politics for the next three decades; his confrontation with imperialism was to culminate in its liquidation not only in India but in the rest of the world. The final result was, however, obvious neither to the British nor to the Indians, while the struggle lasted.

Gandhi's emergence as the leading actor on the political stage was a phenomenon which was as bewildering to the Indian political elite of the day as it was to the British authorities. He had returned to India early in 1915 after 20 years' absence in South Africa. For the first few years he seemed to be on the periphery of nationalist politics, strangely out of tune with the leaders of the day.

In 1917 he struck Edwin Montagu, the Secretary of State for India, as "a social reformer with a real desire to find grievances and to cure them, not for any reasons of self-advertisement, but to improve the conditions of his fellowmen. He dresses like a coolie, forswears all personal advancement, lives practically on his air and is a pure visionary."

This image of a starry-eyed idealist was strengthened by Gandhi's studied abstention from the home rule movement on the plea that it was wrong to embarrass Britain while she was engaged in a life-and-death struggle during the world war. His

he was on his way to Delhi brought back by train to Bombay. The disturbances in Ahmedabad and other places provoked by his arrest, however, forced the government to retrace their steps. Gandhi himself was taken aback by the popular reaction to his arrest in his home province and helped in restoring peace quickly. Meanwhile, a terrible tragedy had been enacted at Amritsar and martial law proclaimed in the Punjab. Lord Chelmsford's government had burnt its fingers in its initial stage of Gandhi's Row-

broadside against the materialistic civilization of the West and the use of English as a medium of instruction in Indian schools grated on the ears of the Indian educated classes, who had learnt to admire English literature, English history and English politics.

In the Indian National Congress Gandhi found himself out of sympathy with both the moderate and extremist factions. What dismayed him was their virtual insulation from rural India, where 90 per cent of the population lived. Both the parties shared the belief that the game of politics could best be played in town-halls and council chambers by the educated, especially the western-educated, classes. What really divided Gandhi from parties and politicians in the homeland was his South African experience. Among the discoveries he had made in the course of those 20-odd years was that constitutional politics for a subject people had definite limits.

He realised that a political contest was a conflict not merely of arguments, but of interests, that a stage could be reached when something more than reasoning was required to redress injustice and to shake off oppression. In South Africa he had evolved his method of satyagraha, of non-violent resistance as an alternative to the use of force. It was as the author and practitioner of this method that he was to come into a head-on collision with the British Raj.

## Reforming Zeal

During the first world war, both Gandhi and the government of India seemed to be consciously trying to avoid a confrontation. Hardinge had taken a hand, at the instance of Gokhale, in resolving the deadlock between Gandhi and Smuts in the final phase of the South African struggle. High British officials in the Government of India seemed to be aware that Gandhi was not a man to be trifled with. They took pains to answer his letters and, when necessary, to explain things to him in person. They hoped that his reforming zeal would drain off in the innocuous channels of religious and social reform. Some of them may even have hoped to

cannot do so. During the next 12 months, other popular grievances, such as the attitude of the government to the Punjab tragedy and the Turkish peace treaty, were added to the Rowlatt laws. By the end of 1920 it was a straight fight for "swaraj" (self-government) for India. Gandhi called for "Swaraj within a year", constitutional reforms doled out in instalments were no longer acceptable. This demand seemed wholly unrealistic to the British rulers of India. The declaration of 1917 had never been intended as a promise of self-government in the



A MISSION OF PEACE: In 1931 Gandhiji was in London

enlist him as an ally, if he cast in his lot with the moderates.

But they soon discovered that he was much too independent, candid and unpredictable for their taste. He seemed to them capable of conjuring a crisis out of nowhere. He could draw the masses like a magnet; he could make high dignitaries look foolish. Even while he criticised the acts of British officials, he claimed to be their friend. After his arrival in Champaran district in Bihar in 1917 had triggered a first class agrarian crisis between the European indigo planters and their Indian tenants. Gandhi wrote to the local magistrate that:

My mission is totally of peace. The government machinery is designedly slow. It moves along the line of least resistance. Reformers like myself who have no other axe to grind, but that of reform they are handling for the time being, specialise and create a force which the government must reckon with.

The Government of India went some way towards placating

Gandhi on the crisis in Champaran, and on such non-controversial subjects as the emigration of indentured labour to the British colonies. But they did not accept his claim that he was a disinterested bridge-builder between the people and an irresponsible executive. They did not like his intervention on behalf of the Ali Brothers, who had been interned for their Pan-Islamist sympathies, or on behalf of the drought-stricken peasants in Gujarat, who were pleading for a remission of land revenue.

The attitude of the government of India towards Gandhi hardened when he denounced the Rowlatt Bills. Lord Chelmsford's reaction to Gandhi's call for satyagraha was to "call his bluff". The government thought of clamping him into prison. On April 1919 Sir George Lloyd, the governor of Bombay, met the viceroy at Kalka near Simla to discuss a proposal to depute Gandhi along with five other political leaders to Burma. The idea of the official hostility to Gandhi may be formed from

and what nationalist India, led by Gandhi, was prepared to accept. It was only natural for the British to try to rally all those who were bound to them by the ties of self-interest—the princes, the landlords, the titled gentry, the religious minorities. It was also inevitable that when Gandhi launched civil disobedience in 1930-31 or in 1940-42, the government used all its resources for the repression of the movement.

Excerpts from "Gandhi: And His Critics" by B. R. Nanda (OUP, Rs. 85)







# Anti-Reservation Protest Growing Clout Of Backward Classes

By A.S. ABRAHAM

THE social time-bombs which the Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh governments had planted before the last Lok Sabha poll are going off even as assembly elections in these two states, among others, are being held. In M.P., an official announcement was made last November increasing the reservations quota for backward classes to 25 per cent of total availability, taking the total proportion of reservations, including 22½ per cent for the scheduled castes and tribes, to 78 per cent. In Gujarat, the minister of state for social welfare, Mr Devjibhai Vanvi, announced on January 11 the state government's decision to raise backward-class reservations from 10 to 28 per cent, with the total volume of reservations going up to 49 per cent which is the Supreme Court ceiling on reservations for all categories of beneficiaries.

At the time these decisions were made public, no adverse public or student reaction to them on any significant scale was apparent in either state. This may have been because the circumstances following Mrs Gandhi's assassination on October 31 and its turbulent aftermath made everything else pale into insignificance and inhibited those opposed to the enhanced reservations from speaking up against them. Now that those tragic events have receded in time and the hurly-burly of political contention has resumed, they have shed their inhibitions.

## Electoral Ends

If the agitation, essentially by students who will be affected by the reduction in the number of seats to be filled through open competition, was meant to embarrass the ruling party at election time in the calculation that pressure would mount on it to retract, then the move appears to have been ill-timed. For opposition parties, notably the BJP, seem to want to dissociate themselves from the agitation. While backward classes bodies in M.P. have accused the BJP and other opposition parties of exploiting the agitation for electoral ends—they are sore that, although the backward classes comprise 52 per cent of the state's population, their quota of reservations is a mere 25 per cent—the BJP president, Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee, has said that his party has nothing to do with it. (At the same time, BJP workers in Chhattisgarh are said to be actively involved in it).

The opposition is reluctant to support the agitation (at least overtly) because, ironically, it has crested at election time. The augmented reservations were clearly designed by both state governments to win over the substantial chunk of the population—some 50 per cent in Gujarat—that the backward classes constitute. How can the opposition be seen to oppose this measure (or to back those opposing it) when it is the opposition that has, throughout the last three years, been clamouring for the implementation of the Mandal commission report tabled in Parliament in April 1982, which calls for reservations of 27 per cent of total availability for the backward classes? Nor, on the other hand, can the opposition parties applaud the Congress for giving the backward classes a gravy train when it is the opposition that has hitherto been the principal champion of their interests. It was Janata governments at the Centre and in the states during 1977-80 who made generous reservations for them in Gujarat Bihar M.P., U.P. and

elsewhere. Caught between two unpalatable courses of action, the opposition has, unsurprisingly, been ambivalent about the agitation.

Expedient considerations aside, the growing assertiveness of the backward classes—comprising, as listed by the Mandal commission, 3,743 Hindu and non-Hindu castes or 52 per cent of the country's population—is a phenomenon that must more and more disturb a social order already in great ferment. One of the chief means of that assertiveness is the reservations policy. But for the Supreme Court ceiling, the Mandal commission would gladly have proposed a reserved quota of 52 per cent for the backward classes. Counting the 22½ per cent set aside for the scheduled castes and tribes, this would mean keeping almost 75 per cent of total availability out of open competition.

How is the M.P. government haing now reserved 78 per cent of total availability for all manner of beneficiaries, going to stay within the ceiling? The present breakdown of reservations covers 62 per cent on a caste basis (scheduled castes and tribes, backward classes as well as others not so listed), 4 per cent according to economic criteria, 5 per cent for servicemen, 3 per cent each for freedom-fighters and "technical" hands, and one per cent for miscellaneous categories. Which of these groups will the M.P. government hit?

The extent to which the Congress finds it necessary to woo the numerically large and politically significant backward classes is illustrated by the lengths to which the Gujarat government has gone to satisfy them on reservations. In 1979, on the recommendation of the A.R. Baxi commission, appointed to categorise socially and educationally backward classes, the then Janata government so labelled 82 castes and other groups under Articles 15 (4) and 16 (4) of the Constitution. Thereafter, numerous other groups, left out by the Baxi panel for one reason or another, sought to be similarly classified. To assess their claims, the Rane commission was set up. In its report, submitted in October 1983, the commission listed 63 occupations (including small and marginal farmers, share-croppers, shepherds and cattle-breeders) and recommended that only those engaged in these occupations who earned less than Rs 10,000 annually should benefit.

## Gravy Train

Fifteen months after the Rane commission had handed in its report, the state government decided to accept its recommendation raising the reservations quota for backward classes from 10 to 28 per cent. But it ignored the commission's proposal for a means test to determine backwardness on the ground that the panel had gone beyond its terms of reference. Since the stipulation of a means test had in the government's eyes, needlessly complicated the matter of establishing which further groups (besides the 82 listed by the Baxi commission) could be included among the backward classes, it set up yet another body, this one headed by a Congress MP, Mr Harooobhai Mehta, to compile a fresh list in which as many as 167 groups are expected to be included.

What is disturbing is not only the manner in which the Gujarat government is bending over double to accommodate backward classes, demands for enhanced reservations, but also its

deliberate rejection on a flimsy technical ground of the proposal to link economic criteria with caste status as determinants of backwardness and hence of eligibility for reservations. While such a link does not strike at the root of the overgrowth of backward class reservations, it would at least prune it somewhat. Ever since the Congress adopted the KHAM strategy (Kshatriyas, Harijans, Adivasis, Muslims) in the mid-70s to counter the alienation from it of the Patels, its erstwhile constituents, the party has set about courting the backward classes, especially the Kshatriyas—Mr Solanki is the state's first Kshatriya chief minister—comprising 40 per cent of the population and including intermediate artisan castes like the Thakores, Baraiyas and Dharalas, besides a small percentage of Rajputs. Since the M.P. and other state governments (Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Bihar show no less solicitude for the backward classes, it cannot be too long before collective pressure mounts for the implementation of the Mandal commission's recommendations.

Were this to happen, the system can bid goodbye to the modern, democratic, egalitarian and meritocratic values on which it is striving to base itself amidst a resurgence of traditional social and hierarchical divisiveness. *Homo aequalis* is what we are after. *Homo hierarchicus* is what we shall continue to have, if the principle that underlies both the Mandal commission proposals as well as the distortion of reservations by the backward classes comes to hold sway.

## Grave Dangers

In 1953, the First Backward Classes Commission (under Mr Kaka Kalelkar) found it necessary, despite its own inclinations, to reject caste as a criterion of establishing backwardness, finding it undemocratic and inequalitarian. In 1982, the Second Backward Classes Commission (as the Mandal panel, named after its chairman, is officially known) has embraced caste, to quote Mr Andre Beteille, "as the basic unit in all considerations of distributive justice". This shows the distance we have travelled—backwards.

While cautioning against the grave dangers which the indiscriminate extension of reservations poses to a social order that is anyway only too prone to fragmentation, it is necessary to emphasise that reservations for the scheduled castes and tribes should be retained until such time as the overall social, economic and educational condition of these two groups, by any reckoning the most wretched of the Indian earth, improves significantly. For until it does, reservations must remain their principal mode of upward mobility. In fact, to the extent their situation has been ameliorated, however marginally, it is at least partly due to this instrument of social engineering. But there can be no case for extending such treatment to those who are backward only by appellation and who are well-positioned in every way to secure their interests without having to depend on official protection and largesse. Selective compensatory discrimination for the scheduled castes and tribes should not be allowed to transmogrify into communally apportioned quotas. For that would be the ruin of such social cohesiveness as we have managed against tremendous and mounting odds, to build.





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# Hundred Not Out

The Indian National Congress will be 100 years old on December 28, 1985. It has been a great organisation, one of the greatest the world has seen. It has been the instrument of India's freedom and the pioneer of liberation movements in Asia and Africa. What a pity that its centenary celebrations should be flawed by a partisan spirit unbecoming of the stalwarts who made it what it was.

The show on May 6 in New Delhi which marked the beginning of the celebrations was seen throughout the length and breadth of the country on television. It looked like a party rally completely devoid of the touch which could have lent it a measure of dignity. Its greatest leader, Mahatma Gandhi, was more or less side-tracked; his formidable lieutenant, Sardar Patel, mentioned only in passing if at all. So was Tilak who was the first to proclaim: "Swaraj is my birthright." The Ali brothers who spearheaded the non-cooperation movement were totally ignored. Gokhale whom Gandhi hailed as his guru was not given much attention. Nor were other giants such as Maulana Azad, Rajendra Prasad, and C. Rajagopalachari. And, of course, no one at the Indira Stadium had heard of Subramania Bharati whose poems had inspired millions of Indians to fight against the British.

The Nehrus have no doubt played a very significant role in the country's affairs for almost seven decades. But the sensitive Jawaharlal with his eye on history would have been shocked at the concentration of praise on his family alone. It is inconceivable that he would have allowed a public demonstration of sycophancy on so historic an occasion. Surely the speakers could have informed themselves of the nature of the freedom struggle which converted the Congress into the biggest anti-imperialist force in the world and of the equally heroic post-independence struggle in the cause of unity and a just socio-economic order within the framework of democratic institutions. Better speakers and poets could have been invited to do justice to the occasion.

Inder Malhotra highlights what was wrong with the whole approach and hopes that the organisers (many of whom are hardly acquainted with either the spirit or the history of the Congress) will on future occasions give a better representation of an event which has worldwide significance.

by **INDER MALHOTRA**

**N**OTHING like the Indian National Congress exists in the wide world. Other freedom movements turned ruling parties in most of the third world have disappeared from the scene, often with the speed of a meteor, sometimes without a trace. But the Congress goes on and on, defying many an alarm about its impending doom and disintegration. On the eve of its 100th birthday, for which festivities have already begun, it looks remarkably fit for its age.

Except for a 33-month interval

(1977-80) the Congress has been in power at the Centre, to say nothing of the bulk of the states, ever since that misty mid-August midnight when the country attained freedom, providing the nation in the making with much-needed stability and continuity. But this is not all. With the exception of the Bharatiya Janata Party — a euphemism for the Jana Sangh of yore — and one or two regional outfits, there is no Indian political party of any consequence whose leaders were not, at one time or another, under the Congress umbrella.

Indeed, it is no exaggeration to

say that the history of the Congress over the last 100 years has very largely been the history of the country also. And the history of the valiant struggle for independence has been even more glorious than that of the post-1947 period during which India has taken its rightful place on the world stage.

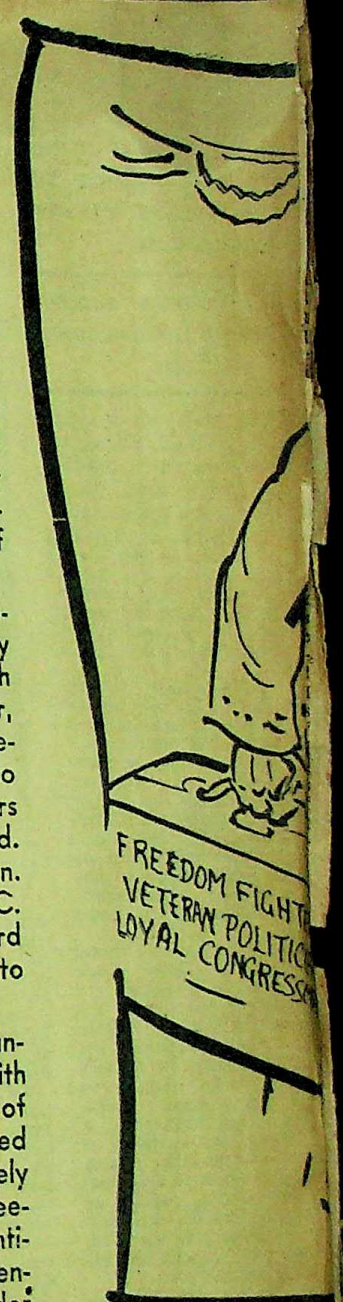
A hundred years from now, people around the globe would still be wondering whether Mahatma Gandhi actually lived and walked the earth. And yet it was this frail, little man who converted the Congress from an association of black-coated petitioners in-

to a mass movement of awesome power that eventually defeated the might of British imperialism.

The Mahatma's mantle fell on the broad shoulders of his chosen heir, Jawaharlal Nehru, who lived up to his mentor's description of him as "Jewel of India" and laid firm foundations for the modernisation of the country that Gandhi had led into the sunshine of freedom.

Eighteen months after Nehru's passing into history, his daughter, Indira Gandhi, assumed the reins of the country and the Congress, tentatively and hesitantly at first, but later with such firmness that its smack was felt by friends and foes alike. Mrs. Gandhi was to dominate the Congress as completely as her illustrious father had — but with a crucial difference. His pre-eminence did not diminish his peers and colleagues; hers did.

Some of the differences of style between father and daughter may have stemmed from personal traits and temperament. Others were the inevitable result of change brought about by the inexorable march of time. However, the fact remains







that under Indira the Congress became an inverted pyramid, something it never was during Panditji's time.

Also, under Indira, the Congress split, not once but twice, first in 1969 and then in 1978. A year before the second split it had also lost power largely because of the emergency Indira had so imprudently imposed. But enough of her charisma and of the Congress mystique survived. Not only did Indira herself bounce back to power in 1980 but, after her brutal assassination, the people gave her son and successor, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, the youngest elected ruler in the world, a mandate of mind-boggling magnitude.

Against this backdrop, who can deny that the centenary of a great national organisation like the Congress should be an occasion for truly national rejoicing? What a pity it is therefore that those responsible for initiating on Motilal Nehru's birthday the six-month-long centenary celebrations should have made such a hash of things that instead of a grand national festival, the country has been compelled to witness what

can at best be called a partisan jambooree.

This by itself would have been distressing enough. What has made things more dismal is that the tone and tenor of the speeches made at the centenary samaroh were hardly compatible with the solemnity and significance of the historic landmark that was being celebrated. However, the rot appears to have set in long before the leaders and the led of what is still officially called the Congress (I) assembled in the Indraprastha Stadium, now suitably renamed Indira Stadium. So let the story be told from the beginning.

### National Heirs

Sixteen years ago when Gandhiji's birth centenary was celebrated, the powers that be had the good sense to form a preparatory committee that was fully representative of the nation as a whole, not of the ruling party alone. Not only were all political parties represented on the committee but also those who had nothing to do with politics but a lot with the Mahatma's luminous legacy. A comprehensive and all-em-

bracing organising committee of this sort was all the more necessary for the Congress centenary celebrations, if only because of the steadily mounting and unbelievably bitter discords in the Indian political system during recent years. But, for reasons no one seems able to explain, the idea of an all-party committee was given up even amidst overblown rhetoric about Congress culture. A committee consisting almost exclusively of the ruling party faithfuls was set up.

To make matters worse no chairman of the committee stayed in position for more than a few months with the result that the committee acquired neither cohesion nor a sense of purpose. The first chairman, Mr. B. N. Pande, abruptly left when he was appointed governor of Orissa.

His successor, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, had hardly settled down when he too was despatched to a-Raj Bhavan, this time in Hyderabad at the height of the agitation in Andhra against the most high-handed and preposterous dismissal of NTR. For several months thereafter the post of

chairman lay vacant. It was given to Mrs. Sheila Kaul only after she had been dropped from the Union council of ministers in the wake of the Lok Sabha poll.

In the circumstances, is it any surprise that, on the one hand, an impression grew that the Congress centenary was not being taken seriously and, on the other, the very large number of people no longer in the Congress but by no means unmindful of their heritage got alienated?

A brusque and grotesquely belated invitation to a galaxy of former Congress leaders — from Mr. Morarji Desai and Mr. Charan Singh to Mr. E. M. S. Namboodiripad and Mr. Atulya Ghosh — had the effect of rubbing salt into the wounds.

The coup de grace to the celebrations was delivered by the likes of Mr. Kamalapati Tripathi and Mr. Brahmanand Reddy who converted the solemn occasion into an opportunity for unabashed sycophancy on the one hand and display of appalling manner, the other.

### Stalwarts Ignored

It does say something of the prevailing culture in the ruling party that those vying with one another to shower extravagant praise on the Nehru family should not have deemed it necessary even to mention such towering leaders of the freedom movement as Sardar Patel, Mahatma Azad, Mr. Rajagopalachari and Dr. Rajendra Prasad, to say nothing of Tilak, Gokhale, Surendra Nath Banerjee, C. Das, Bhagat Singh and so on.

As for the utter crudity of those who called Mr. Nijaliappa senile or accused Mr. Sanjiva Reddy of "bad taste" for failing to turn up at the Indira Stadium, the less said the better. If this is Congress culture, the ruling party is surely in need of a cultural revolution less virulent than that China went through in the '60s.

There are some other issues which cannot be brushed under the carpet even though at times of rejoicing and remembrance unpleasant problems are avoided. About the centenary celebrations, as about the election of the AICC, for instance, it has been remarked at these the traditional Congress cap was conspicuous by its absence. This is symbolic of a change that has overtaken the Congress over the years. It may have described khadi as "livery of freedom", but the sent-day Congressman in safari suits made of terylene sartorial change is less impressive, however, than the change.

As someone said, the mission of the days of freedom struggle is gone and a new mission has taken over. In every deal appears to come the motto of the tribe of power brokers, it has grown faster during the 37 years, more particularly in 1975, than corruption in the corridors of power. The Prime Minister's imagery about the Congress being like the Ganges indeed apt: like the Ganges the ruling party is badly polluted.

This canker has to be no doubt. But for the present problem is to ensure that the 100th birthday in December 1947 Indian National Congress is celebrated more appropriately than the case on May 6. Let the record that the Congress centenary festivities in India as flawed as those on V-E Day in Europe.

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"Quit India" was a retreat by Gandhi from complex problems into the impractical. It was not a proposal of Gandhi the tough, wily political negotiator, but of Gandhi the leader of popular Indian mass movements.

Continuing excerpts from Brian Lapping's "End of Empire".

In September 1939 Viceroy Linlithgow proclaimed war having broken out between Britain and Germany, India too was at war. Indian was consulted. The legislatures of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa were entitled to decide whether to go to war. The leader of the contrast with their own position was offensive Indian politicians, particularly the Congress.

A brief spell of bargaining followed. Gandhi, while a pacifist, urged the British against the Germans and was disposed to offer unconditional moral support to Britain during the war. Nehru, fully pro-British and passionately anti-fascist, wanted to know where Britain's war aims in India. The British could not let the Viceroy say anything firm. So the Congress high command demanded immediate independence and that was rejected, caused the Congress provincial governments to resign...

Linlithgow spent some months in 1940 preparing a declaration promising an immediate extension of the Viceroy's Council to include more representative persons and dominion status to India, i.e. full independence with British monarch as constitutional head of state—within a year of war's end. When the Viceroy had reached agreement, the secretary of state for India put their proposal to the cabinet...

Churchill crushed the attempt by the men primarily responsible for the government of India to win Indian co-operation. Grudgingly offering the Viceroy allowed to make to the Indian leaders in August 1940 predictably rejected by them. One aftermath of the Japanese destroying the American battleship Pearl Harbour in December 1941 and capturing Singapore in February 1942 and Rangoon the following March, the British for wholehearted Indian support in the war became urgent.

The Japanese army was just at the Burmese border; the navy, driven from the China seas, could no longer reach India's east coast; people beginning to flee from Calcutta. Churchill's coalition partner the Labour Party and the Conservatives both favoured a general election to the political leadership of India. President Roosevelt in the war as Churchill's powerful ally, did not want himself fighting for the British power which the United States had been the first to re-organise Churchill to make a statement of Britain's policy for India, as did General Kai-shak, the ruler of China, paid a brief visit to London in February 1942.

Under this pressure, Churchill slowly agreed that something must be done. He accepted two proposals of the cabinet committee chaired by Prime Minister, Clementine, which in effect offered independence after the

war in return for co-operation now. And he sent Sir Stafford Cripps, a senior member of the coalition cabinet, to persuade the Indian political leaders to accept this package. Cripps, the leader of the House of Commons, was an austere, intellectual lawyer and a vegetarian who had invited Nehru to his house in the Cotswolds with Attlee in 1938, to try to ensure that the British Labour Party and the Congress were at one over India's future.

Churchill wanted Cripps to fail... To him the Cripps mission was useful in that it would show the Americans and the Labour Party that every effort had been made to please Congress and that now the war must be prosecuted firmly, with one person in charge and Indian political troublemakers kept out of the way for the duration.

### War Effort

Cripps was sincere. He thought he enjoyed the trust of the Congress leaders, particularly Nehru, and that he could therefore bring them to co-operate with Britain's war effort where others could not. He had two things to offer; a promise that after the war India could frame her own constitution for independence and Britain would accept it, and an immediate invitation to the big Indian parties to join the Viceroy's executive council to help run the war. Congress, however, wanted more than this, in particular they wanted India to be handed over at once to a government largely of Indians. Cripps tried to make the Congress leaders feel that the offer he was bringing met them more than half way. In a press conference in Delhi on 19 March 1942 he said it was possible to "turn the executive council into a cabinet." The Congress leaders pressed him on this idea and Cripps tried in turn to persuade Linlithgow that he could run his executive council in a way that could satisfy their demands while not weakening the Viceroy's ultimate authority.

In his enthusiasm to persuade the Congress he got out of step with the Viceroy. Linlithgow complained that Cripps was "baiting the trap with my cheese" and with Churchill's encouragement began to send secret reports to 10 Downing Street. By now President Roosevelt had sent a personal representative, Colonel Louis A. Johnson, to Delhi and Johnson was helping Cripps to win over the Congress. Cripps's great negotiating skill and transparently genuine commitment to India's rapid advance to independence combined with Johnson's powerful advocacy to leave Linlithgow feeling isolated. Neither he nor Churchill liked American interference. Nor did they want a substantial Congress voice in the Indian government.

Behind Cripps's back Prime Minister and Viceroy exchanged messages and persuaded the cabinet in London that Cripps had exceeded his authority. The charge was false. But the Churchill-Linlithgow alliance won the day: Linlithgow took the chair at a meeting of the cabinet India

# A Call To



BRIEF BARGAINING SPELL: Gandhi in Delhi in October 1942

committee (displacing Attlee) and laid down the policy; Cripps had no power to negotiate, only to present the government's proposal; a cable was sent to Linlithgow: "There can be no question of any convention limiting in any way your powers under the existing constitution... If Congress leaders have gathered the impression that such a new convention is now possible this impression should be definitely removed." Cripps was sent a copy. That was the coup de grace.

The effect in India was dangerous. The Congress felt cheated. Subhas Chandra Bose, had travelled to Berlin and broadcast on "Free India" radio, telling thousands of Indian listeners that Britain was doomed and that her enemies would be the bringers of Indian freedom. Bose then went on to Tokyo and met the Japanese Prime Minister, Tojo.

From the many thousands of Indian troops captured at Singapore, Tojo arranged that Bose should take charge of an Indian National Army, which would assist in the forthcoming conquest of India.

Gandhi produced the slogan around which the mass of Indians proved ready to unite: a demand that the British should immediately "Quit India". It was never clear — probably not even to Gandhi — where exactly he expected the Quit India campaign to lead. He said he wanted the British to leave India to the hands of God — not to hand over power to an Indian government, but simply to go.

"Quit India" was a retreat by Gandhi from complex problems into the impractical. It was not a proposal of Gandhi the tough and wily political negotiator, but of Gandhi the leader of popular Indian mass movements. For

him a united demonstration of the people's will was an end in itself because it helped preserve the strength of the nationalist movement.

Gandhi's demand for a non-violent mass movement in support of a simple, grand objective soon led to violence. He knew that this was likely and even urged his followers to be willing to "do or die". The day Gandhi launched "Quit India" the Viceroy had him and the other leading Congress members imprisoned and prepared the police and the army for the widespread violence that must follow. It amounted to the biggest threat to British control of India since the mutiny. The railway line between Delhi and Calcutta — the main artery of the government — was blown up in Bihar, where, for more than two weeks, the British completely lost control and so could not organise repair teams. Supplies could not be sent to the Burmese front, where a Japanese invasion was feared.

In his enthusiasm to persuade the Congress he got out of step with the Viceroy. Linlithgow complained that Cripps was "baiting the trap with my cheese."

In many parts of the country police stations were burnt, policemen killed, British people on the roads stopped by gangs and beaten up, telegraph wires cut; in all about a thousand people, almost all Indians, were killed. The gov-



# "Do or Die"



1939, on his way to talk to the Viceroy about India's role in war.

ernment did all it could to suppress news of what was happening in order to preserve morale in both India and Britain. For a week or more it was unclear whether the British would be able to reassert control... The army, the police and the administration stood firm. Gradually the violence subsided. The British and their many Indian collaborators once more dragged India back under imperial control. Army recruiting officers proceeded steadily with their work.

Churchill now got his way. The passing of the Quit India resolution provided the excuse he had wanted for locking up the Congress leaders... These were not, however, politically neutral acts... The principal beneficiary of the banning of Congress from the Indian political scene was the Muslim League, whose members were over the next few months invited to form governments in Sind, Assam, Bengal and the North-West Frontier province.

Since the 1937 elections Jinnah had redoubled his efforts to make the Muslim League into the mass party of the Muslims. In this he could not show much early success.

Although the Lahore resolution (demanding Pakistan in 1940) and the growing effectiveness of Jinnah's campaign brought new strength to the Muslim League, it still had some way to go to achieve real political effectiveness when in 1942 it received a major and unexpected bonus. Sir Stafford Cripps, in the draft declaration which spelled out the British cabinet's definition of its mission, announced that after the war any province could stay out of the proposed independent Indian Union and form its own government. This meant that if the Muslim League could per-

suaude the governments or voters of the seven provinces, they could set up Pakistan. Nobody thought they could do it, but this was a major concession and came as a surprise... Jinnah could claim to wavering Muslims that, the principle having been conceded, he was home and dry as far as the British were concerned...

The opt-out clauses in Cripps's declaration pleased Churchill because he wanted both to upset Congress and to encourage the loyalty to Britain of Muslim soldiers. Both Linlithgow, the Viceroy, and Sir Archibald Wavell, the commander-in-chief in India, had said they were uneasy about the opt-out provisions. They warned of the danger of encouraging communalism and separatism.

Within four years Jinnah had established himself. In 1940 he had been the leader of a Muslim League that had failed to win a substantial share of the Muslim vote and had just adopted the apparently chimerical and impracticable policy — opposed both by the British and the Congress — of a separate Muslim state of Pakistan. By 1944 his Pakistan policy was winning him mass support among Muslims and had been conceded in principle by the British; his star seemed to be rising while the leaders of Congress, formerly determined to make him look insignificant, were now themselves locked out of sight...

Jinnah's assertion of his own primacy paid off equally with the British. Linlithgow turned to him as the all-India leader of the Muslims, even though the League did not yet have anything like the authority over its provincial ministries that the Congress had exercised. Similarly Cripps turned primarily

to Jinnah for his draft scheme... Jinnah used every advance he made with the British to strengthen his position with Muslims in general and the Muslim provincial ministers in particular. The time came for a change of Viceroy. Churchill as Prime Minister had been happy with Linlithgow and wanted a successor who would continue to keep the Congress leaders in detention and concentrate on recruitment, production and organisation for war. His choice fell on the apparently safe Lord Wavell, who as commander-in-chief in India had helped frame many of Linlithgow's policies. He was one-eyed, taciturn and notably bad with politicians. But Churchill did not get what he had bargained for. It was September 1943, the war was going well for Britain and her allies, and Wavell, before taking up the Viceroyalty, said that now was the time for an initiative: the reconstruction of the Viceroy's executive council to represent the major political parties. The cabinet's India committee was sympathetic but Churchill turned the proposal down flat. Nevertheless Wavell returned to India as Viceroy clear in his mind that, now India's war machinery was working well, his principal task must be to prepare for rapid constitutional advance and independence after the war. In this purpose he had two main enemies: in London Churchill, who wanted none of it, and in India Mohammed Ali Jinnah, who was determined to have it, but only on his own terms.

In May 1944 Wavell released Gandhi from detention on humanitarian grounds: he had malaria and his wife had died. Wavell wanted to talk to Gandhi about India's political future but received orders from London not to do so.

Gandhi suggested that he and Jinnah should meet, which they did in September 1944 at Jinnah's house in Bombay. It was a remarkable mistake by Gandhi. He put forward a proposal drafted by the Madras Congress moderate, C. Rajagopalachari, accepting much of the Lahore resolution and proposing a federation from which provinces that so voted could opt out. Jinnah responded in a way that was to become familiar: having received an offer of enormous gains, he rejected it as grossly inadequate. In this case his gains were, first,

## The "Quit India" movement amounted to the biggest threat to British control in India since the mutiny.

to be treated by Gandhi as an equal and, second, to receive a Congress offer of the right of Muslim provinces to opt out of substantial parts of the forthcoming political union. He rejected Gandhi's proposal on the grounds that it fell short of a fully independent Pakistan.

Wavell saw Jinnah's growing intransigence as proof that he had been right about the need for a political initiative by Britain. The governors of all the eleven provinces agreed with him, so he wrote to London proposing to try again. But the cabinet's India committee were reluctant even to renew the Cripps offer of major party representatives on the Viceroy's executive council. At first they refused to let Wavell come to London to discuss the proposal and then, when they eventually allowed him to come, they were slow to

be persuaded. Wavell spent weeks waiting about. Plainly progress towards independence in India was low on the cabinet's agenda. It was not until May 1945 that Wavell finally got permission to bring Congress and League representatives (instead of individuals chosen personally by the Viceroy, as hitherto) on to his executive council. For seven months after Wavell wrote renewing his proposal for an initiative, Churchill refused to permit action. Then the Viceroy was allowed to go ahead. Wavell had lost face both in London and in India. He was angry at the way he had been treated.

## Generous Offer

Wavell returned to India and immediately released the Congress leaders, including Nehru, from detention. He then called a conference at Simla of the twenty-one main leaders of all parties to agree on the membership of an executive council, all of whom, apart from himself and the commander-in-chief, would be Indian, to help him preside over the advance to independence. The proposal Wavell put to the Simla conference was generous to the Muslims: the executive council was to contain equal numbers of Muslims and Hindus, although the 100 million Muslims comprised only a quarter of the total population. This proposal was accepted by the Congress leaders in the hope of getting their hands on the levers of power, but Jinnah rejected it as not giving enough. What he demanded in addition was audacious and arrogant: that only the Muslim League should be allowed to nominate the Muslim representatives. Wavell turned Jinnah down. In that case, Jinnah replied, the Muslim League would not co-operate in the council.

This was a daring bluff but one which the Viceroy did not feel able to call. To do so Wavell would have had to form an executive council dominated by the Congress and, with Churchill Prime Minister and expected to win the imminent general election, such a proposal seemed certain to be overruled.

Suddenly the scene changed. The dropping of atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki ended the war against Japan far sooner than had been expected, a mere fortnight after the election of a Labour government in Britain had replaced Churchill's prime ministerial determination to procrastinate over India with Attlee's brisk will to get on with it and get out. Attlee wanted Indian elections held at once and the newly elected assembly members organised into a constitution-making body to agree the post-independence arrangements. He was against constitutional talks with anybody unless they had the legitimising power of electoral victory behind them.

Elections were held at the end of 1945 for legislative assemblies at the centre and in the provinces. The Congress won the overwhelming majority of the unreserved seats; in the Muslim seats the League majority was almost of the same proportion. The anti-League Muslims, notably the Unionist Party which had formed the government of the Punjab since 1920, were decimated. At last Jinnah's claim to speak for the Muslims was backed by the evidence of the ballot box: it was not to diminish his imperiousness.

(To be continued)

An extract from "End Of Empire" by Brian Lapping. Published by Granada on 28th March 1985 at £14.95.

# The

In his lifetime Sanatanist (orthodox Hindu) socialist, a Communist. He was an underlying undercurrent in the forms.

## Concluding dhi And His

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What is the nature of Gandhi's religion did it change? And what have on his

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This was his book which was his "spiritual reform". Another book of The Light of Asia led him; the Buddha's life, re teaching stirred depths.

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The teachings of the Buddha and the (a poet) fused Gandhi's mind. The returning love for good for evil cause he did not fully, but it content in his impression. Before he left England he had already phase of atheism had strayed in ear

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A Call To  
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In his lifetime Gandhi was variously labelled: a Sanatanist (orthodox) Hindu, a Buddhist, a Theosophist, a Christian and "a Christian-Mohammedan". He was all these and more; he saw an underlying unity in the clash of doctrines and forms.

GANDHI'S critics have had a field day, sneering at his "saintliness" and his pursuit of "personal holiness, at the expense of public good." We are told that he was "a Hindu of Hindus," that his religious ideas are of little real relevance to the world of to-

Curiously enough, though Gandhi grew up in Porbandar and Rajkot in western India in a devout Hindu household steeped in Vaishnavism and was exposed to strong Jain influences, his acquaintance with religion, even with the religion of his birth, was of the meagrest, when in 1888 at the age of 19 he arrived in London to study law. It was with some embarrassment that he confessed to some English theosophist friends, who invited him to read Sir Edwin Arnold's *The Song Celestial*, that he had never read the *Bhagavad Gita* in Sanskrit, or even in Gujarati, his mother tongue.

While the literature of the Theosophical Society was quickening Gandhi's interest in religion, a fellow vegetarian enthusiast introduced him to the Bible. The New Testament, particularly the Sermon on the Mount, went straight to the young Gandhi's heart.

During his first year in South Africa in 1893, Gandhi came across some ardent Quakers, who perceived his religious bent, and decided to annex him to Christianity. They loaded him with books on Christian theology and history; they preached to him, and prayed with him and for him. Finally, they took him to a Protestant convention in the hope that mass anointment would sweep him off his feet. It appeared to Gandhi's Christian friends that he had

The first impact of Quaker proselytising in a strange country was doubtless strong on him, but he was in no great hurry to become a Christian in Pretoria than he had been to become a Theosophist in London. His knowledge of Hinduism was yet superficial. While books on Christianity and Islam were easily available in South Africa, he had to send for books on Hinduism from India. He sought the advice of his friend and mentor, Raychandbhai, a Jain savant of Bombay, who counselled him to be patient and to seek in Hinduism "its unique subtlety and profundity of thought, its vision of the soul and its clarity." His scholarly exposition reinforced Gandhi's own sentimental bond with the religion of his birth.

For most politicians, politics is a game which they must play and play to win; what is expedient takes precedence over what is moral. Tilak, the most influential nationalist leader in India at the time, told Gandhi in 1918: "Politics are not for Sadhus".

Gandhi's Hinduism was ultimately reduced to a few funda-



mental beliefs: the supreme reality of God, the unity of all life and the value of love (ahimsa) as a means of realising God. In this bedrock religion there was no scope for exclusiveness or narrowness...

The study of comparative religion, the browsing on the theological works, the conversations and correspondence with the learned, brought Gandhi to the conclusion that true religion was more a matter of the heart than of the intellect, and that genuine beliefs were those which were literally lived... Gandhi's first biographer, the Reverend J. J. Doke, wrote in 1909 that Gandhi's views were too closely allied to Christianity to be entirely Hindu; and too deeply

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In his lifetime variously labelled (orthodox) Hindu, a Buddhist, a Christian, a Muslim, a Hindu-Mohammedan, these and more; underlying unity of doctrines and Christian mission; "irreligious" gamblers... The to save souls str sumptuous... Gandhi's religi



# him to a cave in the Himalayas



Much of the confusion arose from the fact that Gandhi's concept of religion had little in common with what commonly passes for organised religion: dogmas, rituals, superstition and bigotry. Shorn of these accretions, Gandhi's religion was simply an ethical framework for the conduct of daily life.

Many people, who are prepared to concede the value of an ethical framework in domestic and social spheres, question its feasibility in politics, which are proverbially "the art of the possible". For most politicians politics is a game which they must play, and play to win; what is expedient takes precedence over what is moral. Tilak, the most influential nationalist leader in India at the time, told Gandhi in 1918: "Politics are not for sadhus (holy men)."

Curiously enough, it was Gokhale, the moderate leader, whom Gandhi hailed as his "political mentor", who first talked of "spiritualising politics". For centuries, India had her hands of sanyasins who had turned their backs upon worldly ambitions, and consecrated themselves to the service of God and men. Gokhale wondered whether this reserve of self-sacrifice could be tapped for the social and political regeneration of the country.

This idea of "spiritualising politics", of evoking abnegation and self-denial for secular causes, which inspired Gokhale to establish the Servants of India Society, also appealed to Gandhi: he applied it to the various ashrams he set up in South Africa and India. But he went further, and extended the application of this idea to the political field. Satyagraha, his method of resolving conflicts, drew its dynamic from his deeply-held religious and philosophical beliefs, which were not exclusively Hindu. He acknowledged his debt not only to the Gita and the Upanishads, but to the Sermon on the Mount, and the writings of Tolstoy and Thoreau.

For Gandhi satyagraha was a way of life, but to many of those in the Congress party, whom he led, it was just a method for waging the battle against the Raj. This divergence of approach between Gandhi and his following came out at critical junctures. In February 1922, when he decided not to proceed with mass civil disobedience after receiving the news of the Chauri-Chaura riot, many of his colleagues protested that his emphasis on non-violence was overdone. In March 1931, his decision to call off civil disobedience and to attend a Round Table Conference in London came as a shock to his radical colleagues, especially to Jawaharlal Nehru. "There comes a stage," Gandhi said, "when a satyagrahi may no longer refuse to negotiate with his opponent. His object is always to convert his opponent by love." This talk of converting the enemy through love ruffled the "realists" in his party; satyagraha seemed to have ethical and religious overtones which grated on their ears.

Gandhi's use of such words as "swaraj" (self-government), "sarvodaya" (uplift of all), "ahimsa" (non-violence) and "satyagraha" was exploited by the Muslim League to estrange Muslims from the nationalist

struggle. The fact is that these expressions when used by Gandhi had little religious significance. They were derived from Sanskrit, but since most of the Indian languages are derived from Sanskrit, this made them more easily intelligible to the masses...

The protagonists of Pakistan made much play with the phrase "ram rajya" which Gandhi occasionally employed to describe the ideal of the Indian freedom struggle. This was Gandhi's equivalent of the English term "utopia". Gandhi was employing (what Prof. Morris-Jones has aptly described) the "saintly idiom"; the masses whom he addressed instinctively knew that he was not referring to the monarchical form of government described in the ancient epic Ramayana, but to an ideal polity, free from inequality, injustice and exploitation.

It is a remarkable fact that Gandhi adapted traditional ideas and symbols to modern needs, and transformed them in the process. He transmuted the centuries-old idea of an ashram as a

... The resolution on fundamental rights, which the Karachi session of the Indian National Congress passed in 1931, with Gandhi's cordial approval, avowed the principle of religious freedom and adequate protection for minorities; it declared that the "state shall observe neutrality in regard to all religions." This doctrine was embodied in the constitution of independent India even after the Muslim League waged and won the campaign for the partition of the country on the basis of religion...

Those who charged Gandhi with importing religion into politics pointed to his fasts as an example of this aberration. They questioned the ethics of fasting as a political tactic. Were Gandhi's fasts not a form of moral coercion? Did they not detract from rational discussion of complex issues? C. F. Andrews, the Christian missionary, who was a friend of both Gandhi and Tagore, once wrote to the Mahatma from England: "I hardly think you realise how very strong here is the moral repulsion against

Many people, who are prepared to concede the values of an ethical framework in domestic and social spheres, question its feasibility in politics, which are proverbially "the art of the possible."

harm from worldly life for pursuit of personal salvation; his ashrams at Sabarmati, and Sevagram were not merely places for spiritual seeking, but offered training in social service, rural uplift, elementary education, removal of untouchability and the practice of non-violence.

Prayer meetings have been a part of the daily life of the people in India from times immemorial... These congregations are however, sectarian affairs. Gandhi turned his prayer meetings, which were held not in a temple, but under the open sky, into a symbol of religious harmony by including recitations from Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Parsi and Buddhist texts. When the prayers and hymns had been recited, he spoke on the problems which faced the country. In the last months of his life, at a time of bitter religious controversy, his prayer meetings became a de-facto symbol of tolerance, and his post-prayer talk served the ends.

Thus the symbols used by Gandhi in his political campaigns had ceased to be exclusively Hindu symbols. The "saintly idiom" remained, but its content had changed; this is something which often escaped the attention of Gandhi's critics. One of them, M. N. Roy, who in his communitarianism as well as Radical Humanism, had been sharply critical of Gandhi's religious approach to politics, confessed later that he had failed to detect the secular approach of the Mahatma beneath the religious terminology and that essentially Gandhi's message had been "moral, humanist, cosmic."

Deeply religious as he was, Gandhi said that he would have opposed any proposal for a state religion, even if the whole population of India had professed the same religion. He looked upon religion as a "personal matter"

fasting unto death. I confess as a Christian I should do it, and it is only with the greatest difficulty that I find myself able to justify it under any circumstances."

Even though fasting had a place in the religious life of the Hindus for centuries, Gandhi's genius lay in creatively using it as a tool for social action. He described fasting as the "most potent of the weapons" in his armoury of satyagraha. But he also described it as "a fiery weapon", to be used sparingly, and as a last resort, when all other avenues of redress had been closed. However, he took care to use it against those who admired and loved him, never against his opponents. He did not, for example, fast to compel the Muslim League to give up its demand for Pakistan. He fasted to awaken the conscience of the Hindu community against untouchability, and to bring rioting mobs back to sanity.

We learn from Jawaharlal Nehru's autobiography that his first reaction to Gandhi's fast in jail in September 1932 was one of anger at his "religious and sentimental approach to a political question." And yet, a few days later, when there was an upsurge in the country against untouchability, Nehru could not help feeling "what a magician... was this little man sitting in Yeravada Prison and how well he knew to pull the strings that move people's hearts."

Of Gandhi's capacity to pull strings in the human heart, the greatest examples were to come in the last month of his life in the wake of the communal disturbances which proceeded and followed the partition of the country.

"GANDHI AND HIS CRITICS"  
by B. R. Nanda (OUP, Rs. 85)

Dr. Hewlett Johnson, then dean of Canterbury.

Hinduism to be not lead him—as sometimes happens in India—to a cave in the Himalayas. He did not know, he said, any religion apart from human activity; the spiritual law did not work in a vacuum, but expressed itself through the ordinary activities of life. This aspiration to relate the spirit, not the forms of religion to the problems of everyday life runs like a thread through Gandhi's career.

MR. Gandhi's religious and moral views are, I believe, admirable and indeed are on a remarkably high altitude", wrote Reading, soon after his first meeting with the Mahatma, "but I must confess that I find it difficult to understand his practice of them in politics..."

Gandhi was a Sanatanist, a renegade, a Theosophist, and "a Christian". He was all these things in the clash of arms. He chided missionaries' bid to preach him as pre-ious quest did



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CRITICS"  
, Rs. 85)

India" was a retreat by Gandhi from  
plex problems into the impractical. It was  
proposal of Gandhi the tough, wily political  
iator, but of Gandhi the leader of popular  
n mass movements.

Continuing excerpts from Brian Lapping's "End  
Empire".

Con-  
dhi

September 1939 Viceroy  
Linlithgow proclaimed  
war having broken out  
in Britain and Ger-  
India too was at war.  
Linlithgow was consulted.  
legislatures of Canada,  
New Zealand and  
Africa were entitled to  
to go to war. The  
of the contrast with  
position was offensive  
politicians, particularly  
Congress.

spell of bargaining  
Gandhi, while a pacifist,  
the British against the  
and was disposed to of-  
ditional moral support  
n during the war. Nehru,  
pro-British and passion-  
ti-fascist, wanted to know  
ere Britain's war aims in  
of India. The British ca-  
ould not let the Viceroy  
anything firm. So the Con-  
gh command demanded  
te independence and,  
at was rejected, caused  
Congress provincial gov-  
to resign...

gow spent some months  
preparing a declaration  
mised an immediate ex-  
of the Viceroy's Council  
de more representative  
and dominion status to  
e full independence with  
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of state—within a year of  
1941. When the Viceroy  
had reached agreement,  
secretary of state for  
ut their proposal to the

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ding offer the Viceroy  
owed to make to the  
eaders in August 1940  
dictably rejected by them.  
aftermath of the Japa-  
estroying the American  
Pearl Harbour in Decem-  
1 and capturing Singa-  
February 1942 and Ran-  
e following March, the  
wholehearted Indian  
n the war became urgent.  
anese army was just  
Burmese border; the  
navy, driven from the  
hina seas, could no longer  
India's east coast; people  
inning to flee from Cal-  
hurchill's coalition part-  
Labour Party and the  
both favoured a gene-  
er to the political lea-  
India. President Roose-  
in the war as Churchill's  
werful ally, did not want  
himself fighting for the  
on of that very British  
power which the United  
ad been the first to re-  
urged Churchill to make  
l statement of Britain's  
s for India, as did Gene-  
s Kai-shok, the ruler of  
who paid a brief visit to  
February 1942.

this pressure, Churchill  
v agreed that something  
ve to be done. He ac-  
proposals of the cabi-  
committee chaired by  
Prime Minister, Cle-  
which in effect offer-  
pendence after the

war in return for co-operation  
now. And he sent Sir Stafford  
Cripps, a senior member of the  
coalition cabinet, to persuade the  
Indian political leaders to accept  
this package. Cripps, the leader  
of the House of Commons, was  
an austere, intellectual lawyer  
and a vegetarian who had invit-  
ed Nehru to his house in the  
Cotswolds with Attlee in 1938,  
to try to ensure that the British  
Labour Party and the Congress  
were at one over India's future.

Churchill wanted Cripps to  
fail... To him the Cripps mis-  
sion was useful in that it would  
show the Americans and the  
Labour Party that every effort  
had been made to please Con-  
gress and that now the war must  
be prosecuted firmly, with one  
person in charge and Indian poli-  
tical troublemakers kept out of  
the way for the duration.

### War Effort

Cripps was sincere. He thought  
he enjoyed the trust of the Con-  
gress leaders, particularly Nehru,  
and that he could therefore bring  
them to co-operate with Britain's  
war effort where others could  
not. He had two things to offer;  
a promise that after the war  
India could frame her own constitu-  
tion for independence and Bri-  
tain would accept it, and an  
immediate invitation to the big  
Indian parties to join the Vice-  
roy's executive council to help  
run the war. Congress, however,  
wanted more than this, in parti-  
cular they wanted India to be  
handed over at once to a gov-  
ernment largely of Indians. Cripps  
tried to make the Congress lead-  
ers feel that the offer he was  
bringing met them more than  
half way. In a press conference  
in Delhi on 19 March 1942 he  
said it was possible to "turn  
the executive council into a cabi-  
net." The Congress leaders  
pressed him on this idea and  
Cripps tried in turn to persuade  
Linlithgow that he could run his  
executive council in a way that  
could satisfy their demands while  
not weakening the Viceroy's ulti-  
mate authority.

In his enthusiasm to persuade  
the Congress he got out of step  
with the Viceroy. Linlithgow  
complained that Cripps was  
"baiting the trap with my cheese"  
and with Churchill's encourage-  
ment began to send secret re-  
ports to 10 Downing Street. By  
now President Roosevelt had sent  
a personal representative, Colonel  
Louis A. Johnson, to Delhi and  
Johnson was helping Cripps to  
win over the Congress. Cripps's  
great negotiating skill and trans-  
parently genuine commitment to  
India's rapid advance to indepen-  
dence combined with Johnson's  
powerful advocacy to leave Lin-  
lithgow feeling isolated. Neither  
he nor Churchill liked American  
interference. Nor did they want  
a substantial Congress voice in  
the Indian government.

Behind Cripps's back Prime Mi-  
nister and Viceroy exchanged  
messages and persuaded the cabi-  
net in London that Cripps had  
exceeded his authority. The charge  
was false. But the Churchill-Lin-  
lithgow alliance won the day:  
Churchill took the chair at a  
meeting of the cabinet India

# A Call To



BRIEF BARGAINING SPELL: Gandhi in Delhi in October 1942  
the wa

committee (displacing Attlee)  
and laid down the policy; Cripps  
had no power, to negotiate, only  
to present the government's propo-  
sal; a cable was sent to Lin-  
lithgow: "There can be no ques-  
tion of any convention limiting  
in any way your powers under  
the existing constitution... If  
Congress leaders have gathered  
the impression that such a new  
convention is now possible this  
impression should be definitely re-  
moved." Cripps was sent a copy.  
That was the coup de grace.

The effect in India was danger-  
ous. The Congress felt cheated.  
Subhas Chandra Bose, had tra-  
velled to Berlin and broadcast  
on "Free India" radio, telling  
thousands of Indian listeners that  
Britain was doomed and that her  
enemies would be the bringers of  
Indian freedom. Bose then went  
on to Tokyo and met the Japa-  
nese Prime Minister, Tojo.

From the many thousands of  
Indian troops captured at Singa-  
pore, Tojo arranged that Bose  
should take charge of an Indian  
National Army, which would as-  
sist in the forthcoming conquest  
of India.

Gandhi produced the slogan  
around which the mass of Indians  
proved ready to unite; a demand  
that the British should immedi-  
ately "Quit India". It was never  
clear — probably not even to  
Gandhi — where exactly he ex-  
pected the Quit India campaign  
to lead. He said he wanted the  
British to leave India to the hands  
of God — not to hand over  
power to an Indian govern-  
ment but simply to go.

"Quit India" was a great by-  
product of the mass problems  
Gandhi from Congress. It was not  
into the impractical. It was not  
a proposal of Gandhi the tough  
and wily political negotiator, but  
of Gandhi the leader of popu-  
lar Indian movements. For

him a united demonstration of  
the people's will was an end in  
itself because it helped preserve  
the strength of the nationalist  
movement.

Gandhi's demand for a non-  
violent mass movement in sup-  
port of a simple, grand objec-  
tive soon led to violence. He  
knew that this was likely and  
even urged his followers to be  
willing to "Do or die". The day  
Gandhi launched "Quit India" the  
Viceroy had him and the other  
leading Congress members impris-  
oned and prepared the police  
and the army for the widespread  
violence that must follow. It  
amounted to the biggest threat to  
British control of India since the  
mutiny. The railway line be-  
tween Delhi and Calcutta — the  
main artery of the government —  
was blown up in Bihar, where,  
for more than two weeks, the  
British completely lost control  
and so could not organise repair  
teams. Supplies could not be sent  
to the Burmese front, where a  
Japanese invasion was feared.

In his enthusiasm to  
persuade the Congress  
he got out of step with  
the Viceroy. Linlithgow  
complained that  
Cripps was "baiting  
the trap with my  
cheese."

In many parts of the country  
police stations were burnt, police-  
men killed, British people on the  
roads stopped by gangs and beat-  
en up, telegraph wires cut in all  
about a thousand people, almost  
all Indians, were killed. The gov-



# 'Do or Die'



939, on his way to talk to the Viceroy about India's role in

ernment did all it could to suppress news of what was happening in order to preserve morale in both India and Britain. For a week or more it was unclear whether the British would be able to reassert control... The army, the police and the administration stood firm. Gradually the violence subsided. The British and their many Indian collaborators once more dragged India back under imperial control. Army recruiting officers proceeded steadily with their work.

Churchill now got his way. The passing of the Quit India resolution provided the excuse he had wanted for locking up the Congress leaders... These were not, however, politically neutral acts... The principal beneficiary of the banning of Congress from the Indian political scene was the Muslim League, whose members were over the next few months invited to form governments in Sind, Assam, Bengal and the North-West Frontier province.

Since the 1937 elections Jinnah had redoubled his efforts to make the Muslim League into the mass party of the Muslims. In this he could not show much early success.

Although the Lahore resolution (demanding Pakistan in 1940) and the growing effectiveness of Jinnah's campaign brought new life to the Muslim League, it still had some way to go to achieve real political effectiveness when in 1942 it received a major and unexpected bonus. Sir Stafford Cripps, in the draft declaration which spelled out the British cabinet's definition of his mission, announced that after the war any province could stay out of the proposed independent Indian Union and form its own government. This meant that if the Muslim League could per-

suaude the governments or voters of the seven provinces, they could set up Pakistan. Nobody thought they could do it, but this was a major concession and came as a surprise... Jinnah could claim to wavering Muslims that the principle having been conceded, he was home and dry as far as the British were concerned...

The opt-out clauses in Cripps's declaration pleased Churchill because he wanted both to upset Congress and to encourage the loyalty to Britain of Muslim soldiers. Both Linlithgow, the Viceroy, and Sir Archibald Wavell, the commander-in-chief in India, had said they were uneasy about the opt-out provisions. They warned of the danger of encouraging communalism and separatism.

Within four years Jinnah had established himself. In 1940 he had been the leader of a Muslim League that had failed to win a substantial share of the Muslim vote and had just adopted the apparently chimerical and impracticable policy — opposed both by the British and the Congress — of a separate Muslim state of Pakistan. By 1944 his Pakistan policy was winning him mass support among Muslims and had been conceded in principle by the British; his star seemed to be rising while the leaders of Congress, formerly determined to make him look insignificant, were now themselves locked out of sight...

Jinnah's assertion of his own primacy paid off equally with the British. Linlithgow turned to him as the all-India leader of the Muslims, even though the League did not yet have anything like the authority over its provincial ministries that the Congress had exercised. Similarly Cripps turned primarily

to Jinnah for a Muslim view of his draft scheme... Jinnah used every advance he made with the British to strengthen his position with Muslims in general and the Muslim provincial ministers in particular.

The time came for a change of Viceroy. Churchill as Prime Minister had been happy with Linlithgow and wanted a successor who would continue to keep the Congress leaders in detention and concentrate on recruitment, production and organisation for war. His choice fell on the apparently safe Lord Wavell, who as commander-in-chief in India had helped frame many of Linlithgow's policies. He was one-eyed, taciturn and notably bad with politicians. But Churchill did not get what he had bargained for. It was September 1943, the war was going well for Britain and her allies, and Wavell, before taking up the Viceroyalty, said that now was the time for an initiative: the reconstruction of the Viceroy's executive council to represent the major political parties. The cabinet's India committee was sympathetic but Churchill turned the proposal down flat. Nevertheless Wavell returned to India as Viceroy clear in his mind that, now India's war machinery was working well, his principal task must be to prepare for rapid constitutional advance and independence after the war. In this purpose he had two main enemies: in London Churchill, who wanted none of it, and in India Mohammed Ali Jinnah, who was determined to have it, but only on his own terms.

In May 1944 Wavell released Gandhi from detention on humanitarian grounds: he had malaria and his wife had died. Wavell wanted to talk to Gandhi about India's political future but received orders from London not to do so.

Gandhi suggested that he and Jinnah should meet, which they did in September 1944 at Jinnah's house in Bombay. It was a remarkable mistake by Gandhi. He put forward a proposal drafted by the Madras Congress moderate, C. Rajagopalachari, accepting much of the Lahore resolution and proposing a federation from which provinces that so voted could opt out. Jinnah responded in a way that was to become familiar: having received an offer of enormous gains, he rejected it as grossly inadequate. In this case his gains were, first,

**The "Quit India" movement amounted to the biggest threat to British control in India since the mutiny.**

to be treated by Gandhi as an equal and, second, to receive a Congress offer of the right of Muslim provinces to opt out of substantial parts of the forthcoming political union. He rejected Gandhi's proposal on the grounds that it fell short of a fully independent Pakistan.

Wavell saw Jinnah's growing intransigence as proof that he had been right about the need for a political initiative by Britain. The governors of all the eleven provinces agreed with him, so he wrote to London proposing to try again. But the cabinet's India committee were reluctant even to renew the Cripps offer of major party representatives on the Viceroy's executive council. At first they refused to discuss the proposal and then, when they eventually allowed him to come, they were slow to

be persuaded. Wavell spent ten weeks waiting about. Plainly progress towards independence in India was low on the cabinet's agenda. It was not until May 1945 that Wavell finally got mission to bring Congress League representative of individuals as hithe by the Viceroy's executive council. For seven months after wrote renewing his proposal an initiative, Churchill to permit action. Then t roy was allowed to go Wavell had lost face London and in India. angry at the way he h treated.

## Generous Offer

Wavell returned to India immediately released the gress leaders, including from detention. He the a conference at Simla twenty-one main leaders parties to agree on the ship of an executive council of whom, apart from himself, the commander-in-chief, wo be Indian, to help him preside over the advance to independence. The proposal Wavell put to the Simla conference was generous to the Muslims: the executive council was to contain equal numbers of Muslims and Hindus, although the 100 million Muslims comprised only a quarter of the total population. This proposal was accepted by the Congress leaders in the hope of getting their hands on the levers of power, but Jinnah rejected it as not giving enough. What he demanded in addition was audacious and arrogant: that only the Muslim League should be allowed to nominate the Muslim representatives. Wavell turned Jinnah down. In that case, Jinnah replied, the Muslim League would not co-operate in the council.

This was a daring bluff but one which the Viceroy did not feel able to call. To do so Wavell would have had to form an executive council dominated by the Congress and, with Churchill Prime Minister and expected to win the imminent general election, such a proposal seemed certain to be overruled.

Suddenly the scene changed. The dropping of atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki ended the war against Japan far sooner than had been expected, a mere fortnight after the election of a Labour government in Britain had replaced Churchill's prime ministerial determination to procrastinate over India with Attlee's brisk will to get on with it and get out. Attlee wanted Indian elections held at once and the newly elected assembly members organised into a constitution-making body to agree the post-independence arrangements. He was against constitutional talks with anybody unless they had the legitimising power of electoral victory behind them.

Elections were held at the end of 1945 for legislative assemblies at the centre and in the provinces. The Congress won the overwhelming majority of the unreserved seats; in the Muslim seats the League majority was almost of the same proportion. The anti-League Muslims, notably the Unionist Party which had formed the government of the Punjab since 1920, were decimated. At last Jinnah's claim to speak for the Muslims was backed by the evidence of the ballot-box: it was not to diminish his imperiousness.

(To be continued)

An extract from "End Of Empire" by Brian Lapping. Published by Granada on 28th March 1985 at £14.95.

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by BRIAN LAPPING

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British empire has been a unique phenomenon in history. The saying that it was acquired fit of absent-mindedness was an obvious exaggeration. But it was not acquired in pursuit of grand design either. A nation of shopkeepers proud of its pragmatism could not possibly have reduced and pursued a grand design. And the manner of its disposal was as remarkable as its acquisition, though in a different sense. It was wound up deliberately and, we can say, relatively painlessly. Shopkeepers would not stick to an enterprise which had ceased to be profitable. Such a phenomenon can never cease to fascinate, certainly not those who have been involved in it whether as rulers or as subjects. We return to the subject with Mr. Brian Lapping.

by BRIAN LAPPING

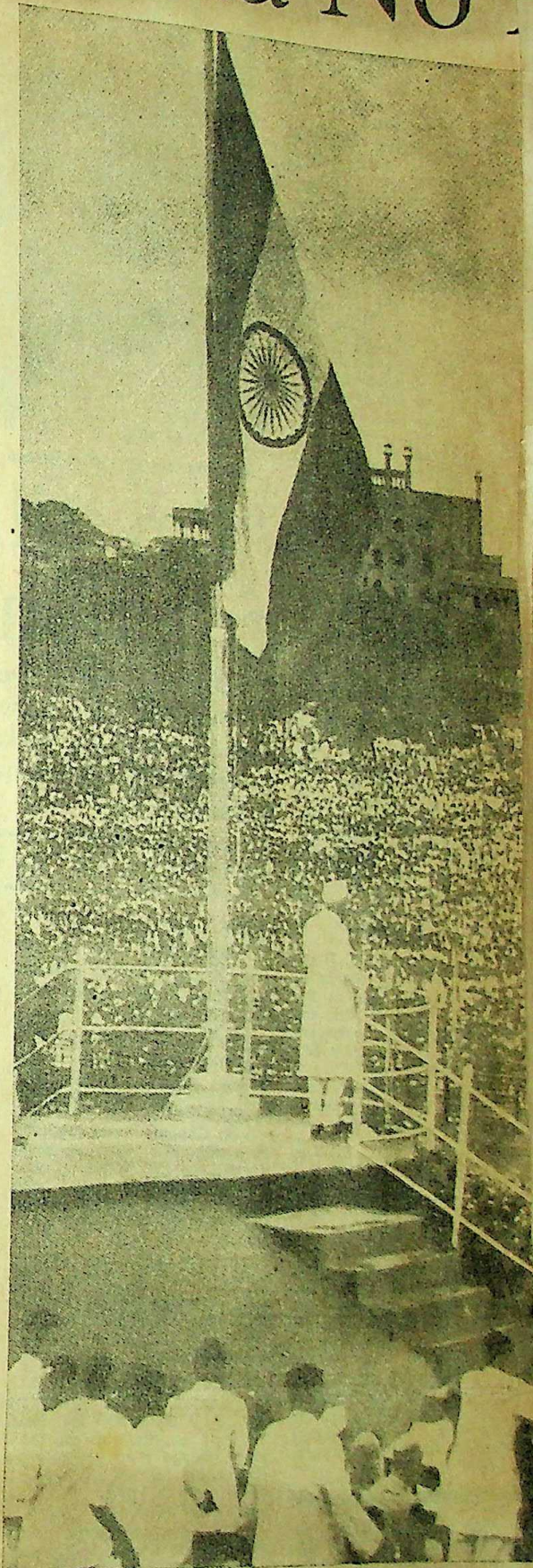
THE Jewel in the Crown is a phrase often used to describe India's position in the British Empire. No term could be less appropriate. A jewel is a small object. India is the largest and most populous territory ever to have been possessed by an imperial power. A jewel is of great value relative to its size. The Indian subcontinent is, man for man and mile for mile, one of the poorest areas in the world. India was never treasure-trove for Britain with galleons bringing home gold as they did from South America to Spain. Yet India was unquestionably the most important imperial possession of all time: it was India that made the British Empire unique. Like Rome in Egypt, Britain acquired in India a monarchy which expressed its magnificence in buildings that still startle and overwhelm. Like Rome in Egypt, Britain became the overlord in India of religions and artstries, skills and traditions running back to the days of the first civilisations, to times when Rome and London were not yet even primitive villages but the Nile and the Indus were already sophisticated trade-routes with large towns on their banks administered by the literate clerks of affluent rulers. Like Rome in Egypt, Britain acquired in India a large cowed population who, in the fertile parts of the country, could grow and sell enough to pay taxes, enabling the rulers to build their palaces and tombs. At first what mattered most to Britain was trade. By the 1914-18 war, what mattered most, what made India exceed Egypt or any other imperial possession in history, was the provision of men: India sent — and paid for — a million men to fight for Britain in the 1914-18 war; India sent two million men to fight for Britain in the 1939-45 war. India provided the muscle that sustained the British Empire: not so much a jewel, more a gigantic engine of war. India started as an imperial possession and became a second pole of the Empire with decisions made in Delhi shaping both British and imperial policy. It was in India that the decisions were taken to colonise Singapore (in the face of fierce resistance from London), to colonise Aden, to establish hegemony over the Persian Gulf, to conquer Burma and to attempt to conquer Afghanistan. Both in Persia (Iran) and

in what later became Saudi Arabia, the government of British India had its own representatives and policies which were largely independent of those of the United Kingdom. Had Britain lost the 1914-18 war, an empire based on India might well have continued, just as an empire based on Constantinople survived the sack of Rome.

The British who first sailed there were not looking for India at all. The story begins in the days of Queen Elizabeth I. The Portuguese Vasco da Gama had sailed round the southern tip of Africa and on to India in 1497. His voyage, like that of Columbus five years earlier, changed the shape of the world as known to Europeans. Till then the eastern Mediterranean had been the main highway of Europe's foreign trade. Goods from India and China had passed from market to market overland to Syria (the Levant) and thence by sea to Italy, particularly Venice, for forwarding on horses and donkeys to northern and western Europe. Da Gama revealed that sailing ships could cross the huge unenclosed oceans, reaching India and China with no need to hump the cargoes onto caravans of camels, no need to pay taxes and profit to Turks and Persians on the way. Until da Gama, Europe's trade via southern and eastern Europe went in oared galleys across the Mediterranean. After him, Europe's main traders came to be the men who sailed, without oarsmen, from the northern and western coast of Portugal, Holland, England and France, out onto the ocean. The ships these men built, strong enough to face Atlantic gales, were also strong enough to fire iron cannon.

The British soon tried to follow where the Portuguese had led. The destination was 'the Indies', but not India. The fabled lands were the spice islands, the purpose to displace Arabs, Persians, Turks, Venetians and Genoese — the masters of the Mediterranean and overland route — in supplying the spices that improved the flavour of meat in the European winter. Spices were needed because most livestock had to be slaughtered each autumn, as the barren fields of winter could not feed them and the storage of winter fodder had not been developed. So farmers would, like Noah, keep a male and a female of each species in the house for breeding next

# India No



spring and would dry, salt or pickle the rest. After a month or so, everyone wanted spices: a small quantity of cloves or ginger, nutmeg or mace, pepper or cinnamon could disguise the flavour of imperfectly preserved meat. The demand was high and

the goods weighed little. They came above all from the Moluccas, small islands to the east of Borneo.

The Portuguese, firmly established in the spice islands, kept out all rivals with their cannon. Then the Dutch displaced them.



# Mere Jewel In Crown

ed to India as a second best.

Immediately after the British in India had defeated Ripon in 1883-84 on the issue of Indian judges, a retired British official, Allan Octavian Hume, founded the Indian National Congress, to channel the counter-surge of educated Indian feeling. Hume had nearly been appointed to the Viceroy's council in 1877, but he was turned down because, although able, he had "obvious faults". One Englishman did not need to explain to another what these were: he was an interfering busybody, prone to taking the side of the Indians against the administration. So he retired from the service, but, unusually, stayed on in India. When Ripon came out as Viceroy he was pleased

ling to London to join in lobbying at Westminster.

The Congress were the body of Indians since the peror Asoka, two thousand before, to take an India India contained hundreds of ers, each nominal sovereign scores of languages written almost as many scripts, diversities of race and religion of climate and food; the continent of the whole of the continent a single nation and simply vaned from men's Asoka himself did not really become known until inscriptions naming him were identified in 1915. India during the British period thought of themselves as belonging to the village; even merchants travelled widely feeling

When Congress demanded representative institutions, the British wanted the voters to be men of education and property. When Congress raised money, their purpose was to set up an office in London so as to influence opinion in Britain and to secure the election of an Indian to the House of Commons.

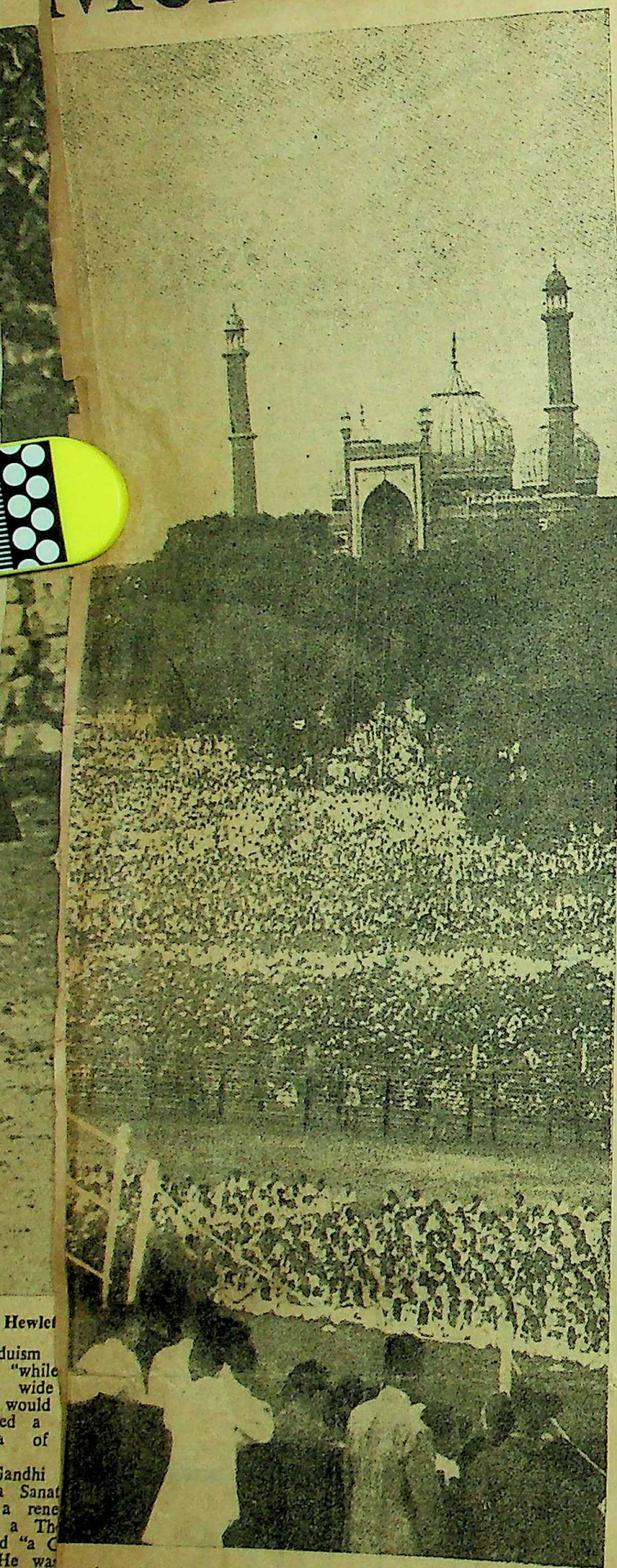
to accept Hume's advice on family rather than a nation. Indian aspirations and Hume's This was not surprising. After pointed himself the two-way conflict, nationalism developed in Europe between the Viceroy and small group of politically conscious, English-speaking Indians. So the Congress members, eager to benefit from Ripon's office, strengthen their attempt at

When Ripon retired in December 1884, Hume was active in organising the biggest gathering from Indians ever accorded a Viceroy, before or since, until Mountbatten ended British rule. Hume followed the process by organising his Indian associates into the Congress. When the Congress held its first meeting in Bombay 72 English-speaking Indians were present. In 1886 in Calcutta 434 guests attended; in 1887 in Madras 607; in 1888 at Allahabad more than 1,200 — an annual gathering of Indian lawyers and other wealthy men to discuss English matters of common concern on which they could pass resolutions and hope to influence the government. At the first meeting the chairman, C. Bonnerjee, described the object of the Congress as to mote "those sentiments of racial unity which had their origin in our beloved

Yet from the beginning it was challenged. The Congress in its earliest years was particularly concerned to advance the opportunities for Indians in the Civil Service and public life generally. The principle of Indian access to posts in the highest grade of the Civil Service had by now been conceded, but in practice the competitive examinations for entry were held for candidates aged nineteen in London. This effectively excluded Indians, unless they had been to school in England. The Congress pressed for the exams to be held in India as well as in England and for the age at entry to be raised to twenty-three in order to give young Indians time to achieve the necessary standard in English. Such demands were popular among middle-class Hindus, particularly in Bengal, whose sons were doing well in English education and were likely to succeed in open exams. The Muslims, by contrast, were badly placed to compete. Until Bentinck's reforms, the Indian courts had worked in Persian, as had the old Mughal administration. Muslim schools still taught in Persian, so its replacement by English, intended merely as an efficient act of westernisation, had in fact discriminated between one Indian group and another. When the Congress won easier access for Indians to the Civil Service, many Muslims feared that the beneficiaries would be Hindus

When Congress demanded representative institutions they wanted voters to be men of education and property. When Congress raised money their first purpose was to set up an office in London, so as to influence opinion in Britain and to try to secure the election of an Indian to the House of Commons. In this they were aided by Gladstone, who, with Disraeli, supported Dadabhai Naoroji's appointment to the Central Finance Committee in 1885. Of course, no one was elected to a committee in India. Hume's position of all Congress total was general secretary; he years from 1885 to for 23 arrangements for the making session every Christmas agenda, arranging for the report after the end of travel-

Continued on Page V



and proved equally monopolyminded. The British East India Company, founded by royal charter in 1600, tried to break into the trade; its merchants (and juniors called "factors") set up a warehouse (or "factory") on Amboyna, a small island in the

Moluccas. The Dutch reacted violently. In 1623 they seized the factory and killed all the inhabitants in what became known in England as the massacre of Amboyna. The British decided to pursue their trading in lands less profitable, but safer. They turned



th as a politician  
d as an individual,  
Nehru set himself very  
gh standards and  
ese volumes are am-  
e proof of what he  
actised and preach-

K. Natwar Singh

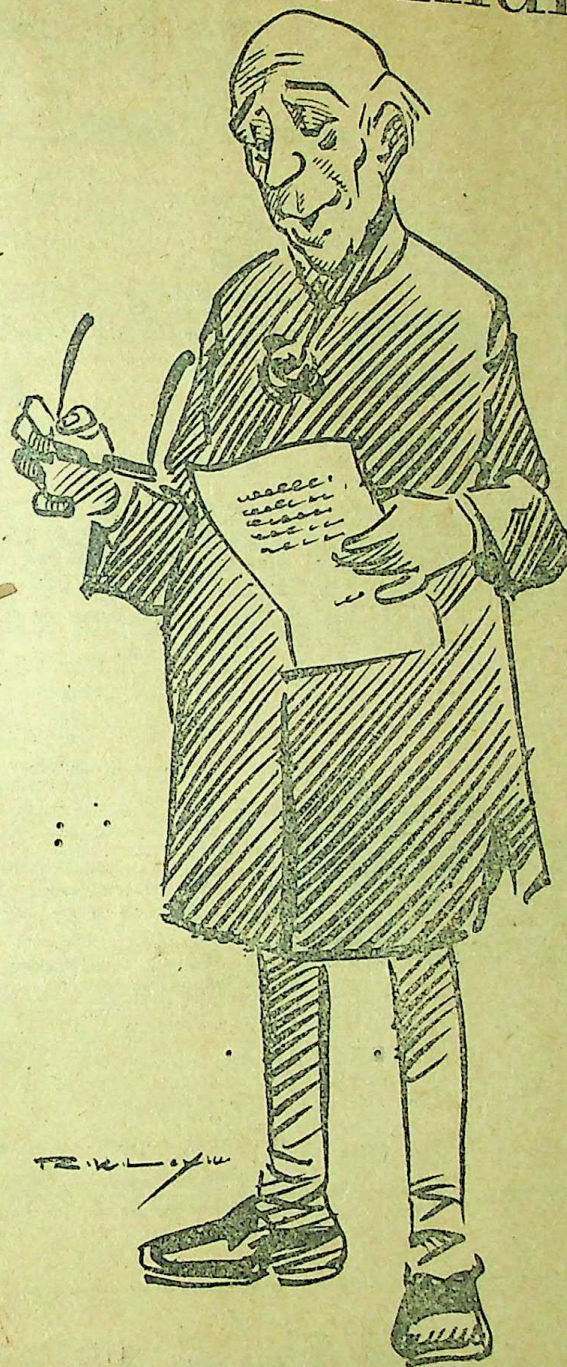
THIS volume brings to a close a major undertaking which began in 1972. These 15 volumes are exceptionally valuable, detailed, informative, more often than gripping, occasionally depressing but never dull, never without substance. They are important both in political and human terms. Both as a politician and an individual, Nehru set himself very high standards and these volumes are ample proof of what practised and preached. He was never guilty of a mean, petty or vindictive act. He was settling accounts with Indian history, not with individuals. Even a formidable pre-1947 opponent like Churchill paid tribute to Nehru's courage and absence of bitterness. While Gandhiji ruled over his party, he did not become a victim of that frightful Hindu habit of passing over vital issues. Throughout, one finds intellectual turbulence, tempered by a serenity which makes Nehru so unusual, luminous and so attractive a world figure.

This final volume covers the closing pre-interim government months i.e. from February 1946 to September 2, 1946 on which Jawaharlal Nehru in his capacity as president of the Indian National Congress (he took over from Maulana Azad in July 1946) was invited to form the interim government and assumed office on September 2, 1946.

Elected Congress governments had been installed in a majority of the provinces of British India. The anti-imperialist feeling had become scorching during the INA trials in 1945, the naval mutiny in 1946 had caused much concern in Whitehall. The Attlee government was anxious to find a solution to the India question and it put three senior cabinet ministers to India in March 1946 to initiate a political settlement. They were Lord Pethick-Lawrence, Stafford Cripps and Mr. A. V. Alexander.

Nearly 200 pages are devoted to the discussions with the cabinet mission. Nehru played a pivotal role, ably supported by Sardar Patel, Maulana Azad and Dr. Radhakrishnan. Gandhiji was of course, always consulted, his approval sought, but the day to day work fell largely on Pandit Nehru's shoulders. He drafted all Azad's letters to the cabinet responses, got in touch with other political parties, particularly the Sikhs, and the Congress generally informed of what was going on. The pressure and the responsibility were borne with style and grace. On the proposals of the cabinet mission, there was no unanimity within the Congress. There was heated discussion at the AICC meeting on July 7, 1946, when the Congress Socialists led by J. P. Achyut Patwardhan, and R. M. Lohia, were not happy with the working committee's recommendation partially accepting the cabinet mission's proposals. At this stage, Mrs. Aruna Asaf Ali went to Gandhiji said, "We have listened to you and obeyed you all these years, you must now listen to us and it is your duty to obey us".

# On his shoulders he bore India



Selected Works Of Jawaharlal Nehru, Vol XV, Gen. Edition : S. Gopal (Orient Longman, P. 145).

Eventually the Congress accepted the cabinet mission plan. It avoided the division of the country. Nehru insisted on the indivisibility of the country and full safeguards for the minorities. But Mr. M. A. Jinnah would have none of it, and using Nehru's July 10, 1946, Bombay press conference as an excuse withdrew his acceptance and announced August 16 as direct action day.

When the Muslim League turned down the viceroy's invitation to join the interim government (they came in a few weeks later), Jawaharlal Nehru wrote to Lord Wavell on September 1, 1946:

Dear Lord Wavell,

I enclose a list indicating how portfolios be allotted to the members of the provisional government.... This government will function as a cabinet and will be jointly responsible for its decisions....

Then he gave the portfolios of the members of the interim government:

1. External affairs and commonwealth affairs — Jawaharlal Nehru.
2. Defence (or war) — S. B. Singh.
3. Home including I & B — S. Vallabhbhai Patel.
4. Finance — Dr. J. Mathai.
5. Communications (even transport and railways) — Mr. M. Asaf Ali.
6. Agriculture and food — Dr. R. Prasad.
7. Labour — Mr. J. Ram.
8. Health — Mr. Shajid Ahmed Khan.
9. Education — Mr. Shajid Ahmed Khan.
10. Legislative — Ali Zafar.
11. Posts and telegraph — Syed Ali Zafar.
12. Industries and supplies — Mr. C. Rajagopalachari.
13. Works, mines and power — Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose.

14. Commerce — Mr. C. M. Bhabha.

It is worth quoting portions of Nehru's press statement published on September 2, 1946: "... I am deeply grateful for all these good wishes and I am sorry I cannot acknowledge them separately. I feel in no mood to congratulate myself or others for we have yet to reach our goal and the path is still difficult. Though I am not used to prayers, it is in a prayerful mood that I approach this task, fervently hoping for the cooperation of all my countrymen in facing the difficult task ahead. I regret deeply that the Muslim League has for the moment chosen a different path. I shall continue to hope for their cooperation and the door for it will always be open. For this business concerns us all and we would be unworthy of the people's confidence if we functioned in a narrow way seeking the good of particular groups and parties and forgetting the larger good of the nation. My colleagues and I go forward as Indians thinking of India, working for India's freedom and the emancipation of the masses. If we forget this at any time then we shall have failed in our endeavour."

## Freedom Beckons

"Destiny has conspired to take us on new ways and we have answered this call of destiny with courage and faith in India's future. The dream of her freedom that has inspired us for so long beckons to us again and seems nearer realisation. May we prove worthy servants of India and her people. Jai Hind."

What a sense of occasion and history he had. There is much more in this volume. A detailed account of his visit to Malaya in early 1946 and his first meeting with Lord Louis Mountbatten. They took to each other right away and their friendship was to have a profound influence on Indo-British relations for two decades after independence. Considerable space is devoted to the states people's movement. Jawaharlal Nehru was president of the All-India States People's Conference. There is a hilarious account of his brief arrest in Kashmir state in June 1946.

There are notes on the reorganisation of the AICC, its library, the Congress budget (every party is accounted for), speeches, articles on foreign affairs, editorials for the National Herald including the one on the dropping of the atom bomb on Hiroshima, events in neighbouring countries, letters to Gandhiji and members of the family and friends. All excellent prose and seldom does Nehru repeat himself in his writings.

I have elsewhere written that one of the truly memorable attributes of Nehru was to constantly raise the level of our national political dialogue. His letter to Dr. P. Subbarayan (page 252) is a striking example of how a great man and great political party should conduct business.

Dr. S. Gopal, the editor, deserves full praise for the meticulous research, the flawless editing and hard labour that went into the major work relating to the inspiring life and work of a man who, in the words of Mrs. Gandhi, "was not only a leader of men and a lover of mankind but a completely integrated human being."



... the resultant control of the legislature would have been more effective. We would have had better governors and judicial members. This process would also ensure stability for duly elected state governments and the independence of the jury.

by I. K. Gujral

THE opposition parties' conclave in Srinagar, last year, had recommended setting up a "mandatory inter-state council" under Article 263 of the constitution. It was suggested that such a council — comprising the prime minister and chief ministers of all states — should deal with all disputes between the states and Union government; and finalise appointments of governors and Supreme Court judges. The recommendation emphasised that this council should be consulted prior to imposition of President's rule in any state.

Quite a few participants who had held responsible governmental positions, pointed out that such a council would not only strengthen the federal policy, it would also make the actions of the central government accountable to a group of responsible men. Though some authors of our constitution had hoped that the Rajya Sabha would be able to perform responsibilities of such superintendence but experience has shown that being very unlike the American Senate it does not exercise any authority that could enable it to safeguard the interests of the states.

It may be correct to say that there is hardly a line of distinction between the two houses in so far as their day to day functioning is concerned. Of course the Rajya Sabha does not intervene in money matters — though it does debate and "return" the budget to the lower chamber. Dr. N. K. Trikha in his recently published treatise *Second Chamber Of Indian Parliament*, quotes Dr. Ambedkar as saying "... the upper house of the Indian Parliament cannot have the character of an upper house in a typical federation. Since the constitution is partly unitary and partly federal, the role and function of the Rajya Sabha is bound to reflect this position ...". Although the Rajya Sabha has the exclusive authority to pass a resolution enabling the Parliament to enact laws for the whole country or a part thereof on subjects listed in the state list, this power has never been invoked so far, and indeed it is a relief since such enactments would have completely eroded whatever is left of the states' autonomy.

The author interestingly recalls that the Congress (I) while in opposition, tried to use this Article to impose a ban on cow-slaughter throughout the country but it could not have its way. Under Article 312 the Rajya Sabha is exclusively empowered to create new all-India services and here too the consent of the states is assumed.

Contemporary debate regarding the federal policy could recall the original resolution on aims and objects of the constitution moved by Jawaharlal Nehru, when consideration of the draft constitution was taken up. It said: "The constituent 'territories' of the Union were envisaged as autonomous units with residuary

Sanjiva Reddy. Photo: Prem Kapoor

powers encompassing the principles of a federation". Though, says Dr. Trikha, "this was not incorporated in the final scheme of the constitution", the resolution had suggested "... the territories (meaning present states) shall possess and retain the status of autonomous units together with residuary powers and (will) exercise all powers and functions of the government and administration, save except such powers and functions as are inherent or implied in the Union or resulting therefrom". The author traces the

Prof. N. G. Ranga — who presently adorns the Congress (I) benches, was prophetic in his original incarnation when he said, "Sir, with regard to one aspect of our constitution I am a little unhappy, and that is the degree of centralisation that we provided for in this constitution. Not that I do not want a strong Central government: all of us want it. But just contemplate for a moment what is likely to happen if another Hitler were to rise and take charge of the Central government".

## Second Chamber Of Indian Parliament : By Dr. N. K. Trikha (Allied Publishers, Rs. 75)

fate of this resolution which would have drastically transformed the character of Centre-state relations.

The "matter was raised again at the far end of the debate during the consideration of the preamble, the Assembly finally rejected the demand for the mention of the word 'federal' in it". It is interesting to learn that Maulana Hasrat Mohani, whose birth centenary we celebrated last year, tried to persuade the august Assembly by moving an amendment that sought to replace the words "sovereign, democratic, republic" with "sovereign, federal, republic". The Maulana charged Dr. Ambedkar with "deliberately ignoring the original objective of the constitution in respect of creating federation".

It was in the authoritarian days of the emergency that the Parliament or for that matter the entire political system proved how easily it could be subverted. And the extra constitutional personnel could bend this over-centralised system for their purpose.

Neither the Rajya Sabha nor the Lok Sabha exhibited the capacity to resist or even debate the plethora of constitutional amendments that were approved in all their three readings, in a matter of minutes. It was comical when the government got one particular amendment approved by the Rajya Sabha and then changed its mind before it could be presented to the Lok Sabha.

Dr. Trikha's book is well written. It presents various aspects

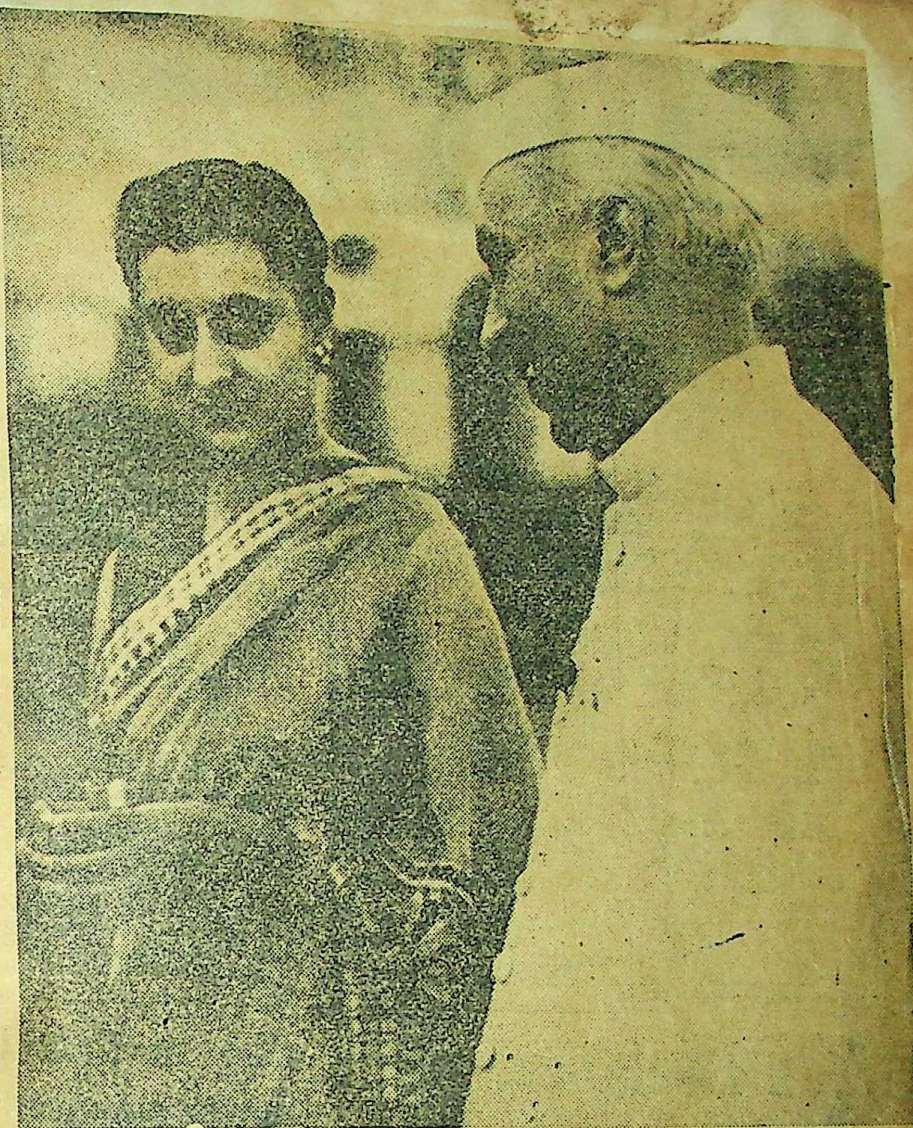
of the functioning of the Rajya Sabha and brings out its structural limitations vividly. The states get their representation on the basis of population and in the process smaller states get lost. It might have been more effective if, structured on the pattern of the American Senate, equal representation were given to all states. This would have made the federal expression more realistic and the upper house would have acquired a distinctive character.

In our scheme of things, the well entrenched executive has limitless powers so long as it enjoys a majority in the Lok Sabha. Therefore, details of its actions are not scrutinised in detail despite all the cut-motions, question hours and adjournment motions. If the Rajya Sabha had as much authority as the American Senate regarding confirmation of important bureaucratic appointments and to scrutinise the governments' international policy and other actions, the resultant control of the legislature would have been more effective. We would have had better governors and judicial members. This process would also ensure stability for duly elected state governments and the independence of the judiciary. Acts of bureaucracy would be tempered and authoritarian traits in governmental actions would be restrained.

I had the privilege of sitting in the Rajya Sabha for twelve long years. Those were the days of the "Young Turks" who led by







**BORN TO RULE?:** If the political leadership is decisive the bureaucracy has to live with a subordinate role in the formulation of foreign policy. Photo: T. S. Nagarajan.

national interest, (2) low education and (3) lack of investigative journalism.

When there is a lack of interest in the general public as a naturally there cannot be who can think of writing with an exclusively narrow the formulation of foreign policy. So far studies in this can be counted on finger prominent among those Bandyopadhyaya, The of India's Foreign and Shashi Tharoor's

Reasons for State. Though, others have written on some aspects of foreign policy formulation, like planning or coordination, etc. Hence, the book under review, is a welcome addition to the limited literature that is available today to a student/reader interested in this aspect of our foreign policy.

Mr Brenner, in the first few chapters in the beginning gives a brief historical description of the origin of the present ministry of external affairs (MEA). India, when she became independent in 1947 was fortunate in a sense, because, even prior to her independence she was introduced to the world through memberships, first of the League of Nations and then the United Nations externally, while internally, through interim government, Indian political leadership, that is an euphemism for Mr Nehru, were given opportunity to learn to manage the nation's foreign affairs. In spite of this, however, by 1947, she had hardly any manpower trained to conduct our foreign affairs, or national resources to create the necessary organisational

affairs, they have to shape foreign policy according to the broad outlines laid down by the political leadership. If the political leadership is decisive as it had been under Mr Nehru and Mrs Gandhi, the MEA bureaucracy has to live with a subordinate role in formulation of foreign policy and be happy with the administration of it.

However, RAW has emerged as another rival to the MEA supremacy. In India, for the reasons stated in the beginning, like secrecy and lack of investigative journalism, we do not hear anything at all on bureaucratic infighting which is endemic in the American foreign policy bureaucracy. But it is not ab-

#### Structure Of Decision: The Indian Foreign Policy Bureaucracy: By Jeffrey Benner (South Asian Publishers, Rs. 85).

Since 1969 the MEA as an institution has had to compete with newer centres of bureaucratic power like the prime minister's secretariat (PMS).

How did the political leadership function to shape India's foreign policy since independence? Nehru was his own foreign minister relying on his own intuition rather than advice from the MEA in formulation of basic foreign policy. Of course, he used it to implement the decisions taken by him. What ever little advice he had, came from his close friends—for instance, Krishna Menon or sometime his sister Mrs Vijaya-lakshmi Pandit. These advisers themselves were rivals to catch the ears of Mr Nehru. But L. B. Shastri, during his brief tenure, gave greater freedom and initiative to the MEA.

Mrs Gandhi, of course after the initial uncertainties, led the trend of centralising foreign policy formulation at the political and personal level where it was left by Mr Nehru for

sent in India. As the author points out: "There is a fairly constant friction between MEA and the PMS, PM's secretariat for example recently blamed the Tarapur nuclear fuel dispute with the United States on MEA (as it was handled by past foreign secretary Eric Gonsalves) and on the department of atomic energy of H. N. Sethi." In the absence of pluralism in foreign policy formulation and centralising tendencies still present in the post-Emergency era of Mrs Gandhi, the nation has to guard against bureaucratic politics. Because, when bureaucratic control administrative politics replaces foreign policy.

The author promises to bring out a comprehensive study by 1987, focussing mainly on the "casual links between bureaucratic politics and foreign policy." Until then the present volume should serve as a useful book for students of Indian foreign policy.



# Wealth Of Notions



ALL FOR A COMMERCIAL SOCIETY: Malthus, engraving after a portrait by J. Linnell, 1833 (British Museum).

Malthus and Ricardo admitted that the commercial state is the flourishing state. But Malthus pointed out that though the wealth of nations may grow, the wages or standards of wage earners might remain stationary or even fall.

by Govind Talwalkar.

ARISTOTLE called politics the master science while to Macaulay it was the noble science. Whether master or noble, the question arises whether it is a science. With this in view, the three authors of this book have examined the theories of the nineteenth century British authors who have dealt with political science as well as political economy. They are Malthus, Macaulay and John, Stuart Mill, Bagehot, Maine, Sidgwick, Marshall and Wallas. Along with their standpoints, those of

Stewart, Stubbs, etc. are also discussed.

These nineteenth century authors were not political philosophers or philosophers of history. They had contributed significantly to the political and social thought of the last century. All of them agreed that politics was not a science as physics or mathematics. Hume simply spoke of politics as dealing with men united in society and dependent on one another.

Adam Smith welcomed the

birth of a commercial society but as he was keen about justice he thought that the emergence of such a society did not necessarily mean that it would be based on justice. His book *Wealth of Nations* also covered the art of legislative work. He proposed various means to check self-interest for the public good.

Stewart had been to France and was impressed by the revolution. But the events which took place after 1795 induced second thoughts and he veered round to the view that the improvement had to be gradually accommodated to cater to the needs of mankind.

In fact, all these political scientists of the nineteenth century were alarmed by the bloody aftermath of the French Revolution and were for gradualism. So Burke was not alone. They were, of course, in favour of reform. This was why Macaulay thought

that the great cause of revolution was that while nations move forward, constitutions stand still. He, along with others, wanted this to happen in this context, the of degradation of the people also discussed. Based on position by Gibbon in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, it was deduced that barbarian races first embarked on conquest which carved empire, the empire collected wealth, which brings luxury; and the comes corrupt and de This cycle of corruption expressed by Byron in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*:  
*It is but the same r the past*

*First Freedom, and the when that fails Wea. Corruption — barbarism*  
This cycle of corruption

not the dominant theme nineteenth century but it was extinct. The empire was great and so nobody could be oblivious of this cycle.

Regarding the violent upheaval in France, Bagehot and others held that the national character

**That Noble Science Of Politics: By Stefan Collini, Donald Wench, John Burrow (Cambridge University Press, £ 9.95).**



IN FAVOUR OF REFORM: Macaulay, an oil painting by J. Patridge, 1840 (National Portrait Gallery, London).

nineteenth century in England.  
• The authors of this book should have explained this phenomenon.  
The book is heavy reading but interesting to those who want to study the nineteenth century political theories.



anickam Pillai, Chowdiah of Mysore and the violin becoming a standard instrument of accompaniment in Carnatic music.

only thirteen of the mandolin with great ease and fully serving all the needs of Carnatic music.

Of course this is not a unique-

not profound, disc.

The death of the great trio of the thumri, Hori, Chaiti, Kajri

is the sitar.

In the face of defeat the Nazis wanted the works of art of the Dresden gallery destroyed so that they should not fall into the hands of the Russians. Alongside stacks of famous paintings were boxes full of explosives.

Jayshree Sengupta writes about the history of the Dresden gallery.

FROM the Dresden Gallery have come 41 paintings to New Delhi's National Museum. The history of the collection is a fascinating one. It makes the paintings doubly precious when we realize that 10 years ago the world lost forever these master-

Italian dukes and archbishops the Electors of

# Baroque splendour

money ran out, dragoons or cavalymen were exchanged for Chinese vases (600 dragoons were traded for a batch of large Chinese vases with King Fredrick William I of Prussia and are still known as the Dragoon Vases.)

Electors Augustus III, though not so strong as his predecessor, was passionately fond of collecting paintings. He acquired the famous Sistine Madonna from a Benedictine monastery in Piacenza, Italy. He also acquired the fam-

building was in the Renaissance style contrasting with the Baroque buildings of the Swinger. But Semper along with composer Richard Wagner had to flee Dresden because of their support to the insurgents who were fighting in the streets of Dresden. He continued to direct the completion of the building from his exile in England. The Gallery was completed in 1855.

The fame of the collection grew. People came to see it and



the war, they would be rich for life. The other reason was destructive. In the face of defeat they wanted that the works of art of the Dresden Gallery destroyed so that they should not fall into the hands of the Russians. Alongside stacks of famous paintings were boxes full of explosives. Martin Mutschmann, the Nazi Commander-in-Chief, actually ordered the destruction of the entire collection before he fled.

The rescue operation itself is a fascinating story as told by the Russian officer who helped in the operation (Leonid Volynsky: The Seven Days). With the help of a cryptic map with very little written on it, they unearthed the Dresden Treasures from the sandstone quarry of Rottendorf and Limestone quarry of Pocken Lengfeld, the distant fortress of Koingstein on a craggy hilltop, and the Weessenstein castle outside Dresden. They were kept in most unsuitable conditions with water seeping through (in the limestone quarry) and damaging Titian's "Tribute Money" and Rubens' "Bathsheba". Immediate "first aid" was given and patches were applied on the spot and not an hour was lost in transporting the great masterpieces out of the hiding places and on to Russia. The paintings were restored and kept in the museums of Moscow and Leningrad till 1955 when





So began a relationship that was to endure until Edwina Mountbatten's death: intensely loving, romantic, trusting, generous, idealistic, even spiritual.

NEHRU first encountered Edwina when he visited Singapore while Mountbatten was still supreme commander in South-East Asia. She was there to meet him when, accompanied by her husband, he arrived at the Indian YMCA. The excited crowd broke into what had started as polite exchanges. Mountbatten recorded:

A roar as of a dam bursting fell upon our ears, and the crowd burst through every door and window of the YMCA. In no time they were upon us. Edwina was the first to be knocked down, and disappeared under the mob. The Pandit screaming "Your wife, your wife: we must go to her," linked arms with me and together we charged into the crowd in an endeavour to find her. Meanwhile she had crawled between the people's legs, and had come out at the far end of the room, got on a table, and shouted to us that she was all right.

Eventually the party escaped into a kitchen and barricaded the door with a table from which Nehru addressed the crowd. "That was an unusual introduction," remarked Nehru afterwards.

When they got back to Government House Mountbatten was enraged at the mismanagement of the visit to the YMCA and the scratches all over his brand-new car. Edwina quietened him with the aid of a stiff drink and assurances that Nehru himself was delighted at the way things were going. She was right. When he returned for dinner the visitor was conspicuously affable, and on

the way home he said that "he had not enjoyed an evening with English people so much since he had come down from Cambridge more than 30 years ago".

That he was sincere seems certain. The Mountbattens out to please were a formidable combination; when they genuinely liked and admired the person whom they wished to charm, the effect was irresistible. Nehru left Government House in the conviction that he had met an English couple whom he could trust and who understood and sympathised with the needs of India. Asked what impression he had formed of the supreme commander, Nehru deliberated before replying: "A very noble specimen of British imperialism."

When Mountbatten became viceroy, Edwina worked hard in the world of health and welfare and established a strong rapport with the Indian leaders and their wives. Gandhi was touchingly fond of her. But her close relationship with Nehru did not begin until India was independent. Gandhi was dead and the Mountbattens were on the verge of leaving for home, Lord Louis's tour as India's first governor-general over.

After Gandhi's murder Mountbatten urged the prime minister to come to live with them at Government House where adequate security could be more easily maintained. Nehru refused, but with the death of the man who had so strongly influenced him he began to see more and more of the Mountbattens and to draw from them some of the moral sustenance which he used to derive from the Mahatma. Their

effect on him was subtle but pervasive.

I am afraid New Delhi and more specially you and Dickie have civilised me too much—and you have humanised me a little also. (he wrote to Edwina in June, 1948.) The humanising part I welcome but the civilising process is not so welcome, however desirable it might be. The wild animal in me, tame though it has grown, resents it and I long to break away. I remember when I was not so tame, and had greater freedom of action, though within a limited sphere. I was rather like a flame burning myself and scorching others, and oblivious of both. The flame grows dim and smoky and the bright point which gave me faith is no longer there.

In the Mountbattens Nehru found companions who were not only congenial but secure. They had no axes to grind in India, no relations to advance, no hometowns to favour, no covetous eyes on the succession. They might see things differently, but their view was as nearly objective as Nehru was likely to hear. The prime minister respected their judgement, had absolute confidence in their goodwill, drew comfort from their support. "I want someone to talk to me sanely and confidently, as you can do so well," he wrote in April, "for I am in danger of losing faith in myself and the work I do. . . . What has happened, is happening, to the values we cherished? Where are our brave ideals?"

This letter was addressed to Edwina but applied to both of

them. A month later it would have been different. On May 30, 1948, Nehru drove with Mountbattens to spend a few days with them in the country near Simla. "Suddenly I realised (and perhaps you did also)," he wrote nearly 10 years later to Edwina, "that there was a deeper attachment between us, that some uncontrollable force, of which I was only dimly aware, drew us to one another. I was overwhelmed and at the same time exhilarated by this new discovery. We talked more intimately, as if some veil had been removed, and we could look into each other's eyes without fear or embarrassment."

So began a relationship that was to endure until Edwina Mountbatten's death: intensely loving, romantic, trusting, generous, idealistic, even spiritual. If there was any physical element it can only have been of minor importance to either party.

Mountbatten's reaction was one of pleasure. "Please keep this to yourselves but she and Jawaharlal (sic) are so sweet together," he wrote to his daughter, Patricia, "they really dote on each other in the nicest way and Pammy and I are doing everything we can to be tactful and help. Mummy has been incredibly sweet lately and we've been such a happy family." He liked and admired Nehru, it was useful to him that the prime minister should find such attractions in the governor-general's home, it was agreeable to find Edwina almost permanently in a good temper: the advantages of the alliance were obvious.

Nor did Nehru feel that his love for Edwina need in any way

diminish his respect and affection for her husband. On the contrary, it heightened it; the prime minister and Edwina seemed sometimes to be almost conspirators in ensuring that Mountbatten got all that he wanted out of life and was not made to feel excluded from their relationship.

Nehru wrote to thank her for a suitably inscribed silver cigarette-box. "For your private ear might tell you, provided you do

not tell Dickie, that the spelling of my name was all wrong. I make no grievance of it. Indeed in a way I like this mistake which makes the inscription characteristic of Dickie; who has thus far failed to grasp completely how my name should be written or pronounced."

Though Mountbatten knew how close the relationship was between Nehru and his wife, and Edwina knew that Mountbatten

knew, they were for several years reticent about discussing the matter except by veiled references. Then in 1952 Edwina wrote to ask Mountbatten to keep Nehru's letters for her.

You will realise that they are a mixture of typical Jawaharlal letters full of interest and facts and really historic documents. Some of them have no "personal" remarks at all.

Others are love letters in a sense, though you yourself well realise the strange relationship — most of it spiritual — that exists between us. I, has obviously meant a very great deal in my life, in these last years, and I think I in his too. Our meetings have been rare and always fleeting, but I think I understand him, and perhaps

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# A Beautiful Affair

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he me, as well as any human beings can ever understand each other . . . . .

It is rather wonderful that my affection and respect and gratitude and love for you are really so great that I feel I would rather you had these letters than anyone else, and I feel you would understand and not in any way be hurt — rather the contrary. We understand each other so well although so often we seem to differ and to be miles apart. You have been very sweet and good to me, and we have had a great partnership. My admiration and my devotion to you are very great.

Mountbatten did understand and was not hurt — indeed, this letter repaired the only injury that the relationship had done him, that sometimes he had felt himself not merely excluded but

kept in the dark.

I am glad you realise that I know and have always understood the very special relationship between Jawaharlal and you, made the easier by my fondness and admiration for him and by the remarkably lucky fact that among my many defects God did not add jealousy in any shape or form. I honestly don't believe I've ever known what jealousy means — universal as it seems to be — and if it concerns the happiness of anyone I'm as fond of as you, then only my desire for your happiness exists. That is why I've always made your visits to each other easy and been faintly hurt when at times . . . you didn't take me into your confidence right away.

There is an element of self-deception in this letter. There had been times when Edwina's behaviour with other men had caused

ed Mountbatten sharp pain — pain that was certainly akin to jealousy. Nor did his wife's relationship with Nehru leave him entirely unmoved; after Edwina's death he asked his daughter Pamela to look first at Nehru's letters, so fearful was he that he

might find among them some proof that the love between the two had not been as platonic as he had imagined.

Yet for the most part he felt not even a tremor of regret. He had never hankered after an exclusive relationship with his wife; he was happy, proud almost, to open it to a man he esteemed so highly. To call it a triangle, or Mountbatten a complainant husband, would be to belittle a relationship that was enriching to all concerned.

"Suddenly I realised (and perhaps you did also)," Nehru wrote nearly 10 years later to Edwina, "that there was a deeper attachment between us, that some uncontrollable force, of which I was only dimly aware, drew us to one another. I was overwhelmed and at the same time exhilarated by this new discovery. We talked more intimately, as if some veil had been removed, and we could look into each other's eyes without fear or embarrassment."



**M**ORE than 33 years have passed since Gandhi was felled by the bullets fired by a fanatic. During this period the political, economic and social landscape of India has changed appreciably, though not entirely for the better. There has arisen an entire new generation of leadership that has no roots in the ethos of the struggle for freedom shaped by the responses Gandhi evoked. While to the young people of the country today the Mahatma is as remote as Rammohan Roy or Lokmanya Tilak, a textbook personality of no immediate relevance, to the older generation he is a shadowy figure with nothing of the vibrancy and dimensions of the man who strode the country like a colossus and who by his words and deeds created a new epoch.

All that remains at present of Gandhi and Gandhism is Rajghat. A few forgotten men and women still perhaps listlessly ply the charkha at Sevagram and Sabarmati and a few devoted followers like Acharya Vinoba Bhave vainly try to keep his message alive. But, without meaning any disrespect to them, one must regard the Gandhians of today as caricatures that excite more pity and sadness than admiration. And for the people as a whole Gandhi is no more than a convenient peg on which to hang the wounded conscience of the nation.

It is believed that Gandhi has suffered the same fate as many other leaders whose teachings have been distorted, eroded, abused or entirely forgotten. There is, however, a difference between Gandhi and other teachers. During his lifetime his following was not limited to a coterie; he inspired great masses of people to a type of political and social behaviour until then not known to history. The quickness with which he has been forgotten, therefore, needs an explanation. We have not even institutionalised Gandhi in a manner worthy of the magnificence of his life and work and there are yet no signs of a Mahayana Gandhism developing.

Does all this point to the possibility that we as a nation have rejected Gandhi consciously or unconsciously? Instead of practising the Rajghat ritual of laying wreaths and burning incense we must examine the causes of the failure of Gandhism: whether it is due to the weakness inherent in the theory and practice of Gandhism or due to shortcomings in our national character. Here we must remind ourselves that we have claimed a moral and spiritual excellence hardly to be met with in other peoples. We have also claimed that Gandhism could not have flourished in any clime other than our own and that it has raised us to greater heights of moral and spiritual glory.

Such claims sound hollow and ludicrous today. While, as is widely believed, there has been a fall in moral standards all over the world, the sordidness of our present political affairs is tragic for a country nursed in the Gandhian tradition.

harmony.

Although Gandhi believed in *varnashrama* he was totally opposed to a hierarchical society. His egalitarianism was the *egalitarianism* of the *varnashrama*.

However, the moral degeneration is neither sudden nor precipitous. It has a history of many years. Three weeks before his death, Gandhi referred in his prayer speech to Konda Venkatappaya, in which the Andhra Congressman had referred to the "moral degradation" of Congressmen.

Today, 33 years later, moral turpitude and corruption have ceased to shock us because they have increased so enormously that they have bred all-round cynicism. There are few Venkatappayas to lament the decline in standards. The question we must ask ourselves is whether our behaviour was exemplary during the Gandhian movement and if so how we slid down the path of wickedness. The answer is not easy since we are concerned with a whole people and since the forces of history acting upon them are difficult to study.

**For the people as a whole Gandhi is no more than a convenient peg on which to hang the wounded conscience of the nation.**

Gandhism was a cover that concealed most of our shortcomings. During the movement for freedom there was something like the postponement of pleasure, not a self-denial in the true Gandhian sense. The struggle for power has come as a logical extension of the struggle for freedom and it has brought to the surface our hypocrisy and cupidity.

Gandhism was but a temporary discipline and we were Gandhians out of convenience, out of necessity, and not out of conviction. There were, of course, individuals who were prepared to lay down their lives for the tenets of Gandhism and for the country and there were many who fell to British bullets or were crushed underfoot by British soldiers wearing hobnailed shoes. There were acts of momentary heroism, acts of selflessness, inspired by Gandhi. But in most of the satyagrahis there was the heart of the *duragrabhi*. That our present heritage is largely a heritage of *duragrabhi* is a measure of the failure of Gandhi and Gandhism. But this is a natural development considering the expectations freedom arouses.

Gandhism was a historical necessity for India and there was no alternative to it. We were not ready for an armed rebellion; we had neither the means nor the capacity for it. Even those who did not honestly believe in non-violence enrolled under Gandhi since he was able to involve the masses and since the campaigns launched by him had a revolutionary character.

In some of his struggles, this small, fragile man, a whiff of a heroic saint, assumed the proportions of an epic figure. And that made him attractive and irresistible to peasant and pandit. In the case of others their aggressive spirit found a non-violent outlet. It is significant

**temporary discipline and we were Gandhians out of necessity, and not out of conviction.**

How is one to interpret Gandhiji and his impact on India? Apparently, the task is not particularly difficult. Gandhiji stood for certain values all his life and he advocated certain programmes which he was convinced would restore India to health. Modern India does not practise those values and it has not even tried to implement his programmes. So it is natural to judge him a failure, as RGK does in his article.

This is the popular view. The critics of Mr. Nehru have successfully sold the notion that he had

that many of his followers were displeased when the Mahatma called off a satyagraha because it had been vitiated by violence. For the majority of his followers, however, it was not the non-violence of the brave but the non-violence of the timid and the feeble-hearted. Looking back one cannot but come to the conclusion that we adopted non-violence almost wholly as a matter of expedience since we had no choice in the matter.

Gandhi himself was aware of this as is clear from what he once wrote to C. F. Andrews: "When friends told me here that passive resistance was taken up by the people as a weapon of the weak, I laughed at the label, as I called it then. But they were right and I was wrong. With me alone and a few other co-workers it came out of strength and was described as satyagraha, but with the majority it was purely and simply passive resistance that they resorted to, because they were too weak to undertake methods of violence."

That we accepted non-violence not as an inviolable principle but only as a policy will be clear if we remember the Poona resolution of the Congress which has been unreasonably reduced to a footnote, instead of a major chapter, of the history of the Congress. In 1940, when the likelihood of India being attacked was not altogether remote, the question arose as to how the nation would defend itself against Japanese or German aggression. To the Mahatma's closest associates, barring a few, ahimsa seemed totally ineffectual against the hordes of Hitler and Tojo. The result was the Poona resolution which approved the principle of armed

**"Whatever is to be the result, I feel certain that the power must be restored to India. The result may be carnage. Then India must go through it. Today's condition is intolerable."**

—Gandhi.

defence in the event of an invasion: ironically, it was sponsored by C. Rajagopalachari who was regarded as the "conscience-keeper" of Gandhi.

The Poona resolution was a clear admission that we did not accept non-violence as a principle of universal application. Gandhi himself preferred violence to cowardly submission to wrong. He was also not unappreciative of soldierly virtues

even consistency. His life was a magnificent experiment. The Gandhian laboratory is in a shambles and to many of us his hypotheses are no more valid than the beliefs of the alchemists.

and the discipline that fighting implied. He said: "A nation that is unfit to fight cannot from experience prove the virtue of not fighting. I do not infer from this that India must fight. But I do say that India must know how to fight." It is the opinion of Acharya Kripalani that Gandhi was not a pacifist and that he did not consider violence as the greatest evil for individuals or nations.

Gandhi's few of violence and non-violence was not one of black and white. His understanding of the problem was very complex and he was himself helpless in making a moral decision about ahimsa. "Shall we," he asks, "teach our boys to return two blows for one, or tolerate a blow from anyone weaker than themselves but to fight back, should a stronger one attack them, and take the beating that might follow?.... One can try to imitate the Himalayas in a fashion. Can it be that in the path of non-violence too, it is difficult?"

One suspects that there was a streak of violence in the personality of Gandhi. Erik Erikson's study of Gandhi's Truth has the sub-title, "On the Origins of Militant Non-violence". He wonders if the experience of disciplined rage alone provides the basis for true self-control. He makes the observation that "once it was clear that the virtues of disciplined violence could not be bypassed, then the future of a people like the Indians, the majority of whom had not learned to assume the identities based on organised warfare would always be in danger of erupting into disorganised violence—or undisciplined non-violence". He quotes the Mahatma's own prophetic words: "Today I find that everybody is desirous of killing but most are afraid of doing so or powerless to do so. Whatever is to be the result, I feel certain that the power must be restored to India. The result may be carnage. Then India must go through it. Today's condition is intolerable."

And India did go through the carnage. Was Gandhi a failure because we lacked the "disciplined rage" necessary for non-violence, the aggression that is rationally channelised and turned against the opponent in a civilised manner? Whatever it be, we cannot claim that we have a special role in propagating ahimsa. While ahimsa is exalted by Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, universal non-killing is practised only by the Jains. Sri Chandrasekharendra Sarasvati, the senior Sankaracharya of Kanchi, says: "According to the British rule, the compulsory disarmament made us unarmed, and the presence of an alien army of occupation, employed with effect to crush the spirit of the



GANDHI was one of the great activist theoreticians of the twentieth century. Few leaders have spent more time as a public figure. Both at home and abroad, Gandhi attracted millions of people with diverse backgrounds to his movements over an extended period of time.

However, in spite of the world-wide attention given to Gandhi's life, teachings and movements, there are only a few critical works. Most of the literature examines the uniqueness of Gandhi, his life, his indomitable faith in the ultimate success and universal acceptance of non-violence, his optimism, his vegetarianism, his denunciation of materialistic Western civilisation, his many unusual notions, and his practice and popularisation of a simple and clean life.

Critical evaluations of Gandhi's political philosophy and the social, economic and political consequences of that philosophy are conspicuous by their absence. The well written, informative works by Pyarelal and Tendul-

of non-violent methods in fighting imperialism. The reason for understanding Gandhi lay not in his political philosophy, but in using his methods which had been so successful in South Africa and India. As a consequence, outside observers have more or less ignored Gandhi's political philosophy and his specific role in India's freedom movement.

Perhaps the only group which entirely disagreed with Gandhi's method, philosophy and outlook from the very beginning were the Marxists, specially the Indian Marxists. This antipathy of the Marxists towards Gandhi is understandable as his prescription is as far removed from the Marxist ideal of a socialist, stateless and classless utopia as it is from other Western socialist schools like the Fabian socialists and the guild socialists. Gandhi himself was conscious of this wide divergence between his convictions and the Marxists and made it known quite explicitly.

But one of the major inadequacies faced by the Marxists regarding their analysis of Gandhi's role has been that till today

# We Need Critical Assessment

by SUBRATA MUKHERJEE

kar are no exceptions. They are more in the nature of narrations, describing the life and happenings around Gandhi; rather than critically examining Gandhi's writings and his role in Indian politics, they describe his life and environment.

Gandhi dominated the Indian political scene for more than a quarter of a century, and most of the prominent political and intellectual figures were influenced by him. There were basic disagreements regarding Gandhi's method and philosophical foundations. Most of the Congress leaders accepted non-violence more as a convenient and useful policy rather than as a creed, as Gandhi would have preferred. The disagreements were natural in the open atmosphere surrounding the movements he led.

People with different and even contradictory political leanings gathered under Gandhi's platform for India's independence, making disagreements within the Congress inevitable. However, these disagreements were mostly in the nature of friendly criticisms, challenging particular techniques and policies rather than the entire edifice built by Gandhi. They did not question whether Gandhi's actions would promote particular interests, nor did they doubt his motives.

For non-Indians, the interest in and attention paid to Gandhi varied considerably. For Anglo-American scholars, the primary interest was in the areas of non-violence, Gandhi's severe indictment of Western materialism, his amazing success in leading the anti-colonial movement in India and his prescription for a simple life. For African leaders, like Nkrumah and Kaunda, the interest centered on the effectiveness

they have not been able to satisfactorily explain the phenomenon of Gandhi even to themselves although they have tried it for more than half a century. S. G. Sardesai summarises the two major reasons for the continued Marxist aversion towards Gandhi. Firstly, Gandhi had a medieval and mystical ideology and secondly, in actual politics there were many compromises with imperialist forces as well as Indian bourgeois and feudal interests which hampered the full development of national revolutionary forces.

Coupled with these there was also the fact that though he "always approached Indian communists as dedicated though erring youngsters, he fully reciprocated our basic antipathy towards him by a similar antipathy towards Marxism, towards the very concept of class struggle and hence towards us".

However, in spite of this assertion, Sardesai concedes that the Marxists could not fully comprehend the role of Gandhi and Gandhism "in their totality". As a consequence, both remain an 'enigma' to the Marxists. This clear admission may well explain the continued Marxist dilemma of dissecting Gandhi's role, specially in his emphasis on gradualism and the differing assessments at different times and the ever growing Marxist interest in properly understanding Gandhi's unique role in Indian politics.

One very important reason for Gandhi becoming an umbrella ideology is the fact that amongst the important thinkers of the contemporary world, he is the least consistent and pointing out contradictions either within any of his works or between them is not a very arduous task. How-

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# We Need Critical Assessment

of resistance, has made us think we cannot look after ourselves or put up a defence against foreign aggression, or even defend our homes and families."

These passages clearly bring out Gandhi's analysis of the actual reality. Primarily as an activist, he could have hardly ignored these factors which had their reflections in all arenas of the national life. Under these circumstances, gradualism could be the only effective method of national reconstruction. This reluctant admission becomes manifest when we find the anguish of Gandhi at the cruel and exploitative structure of Indian society and his critical dissection of Western civilisation.

Gandhi's major focus was the contemporary Indian scene and it was to his credit that he wanted to grasp the innumerable complexities of Indian society in detail. At the core of this analysis lies the fact that Gandhi readily accepted the modern Indian situation as a situation of severe conflict which manifested itself in its acutest form in three important segments, (a) conflict of labour and capital in the industrial sector, (b) conflict of tenants and landlord in agriculture and (c) the unique innovation of Gandhi, the conflict of village and city.

When his prescriptions to end these conflicts, trusteeship and passive resistance, are analysed and their inadequacies are pointed out, what is normally sidetracked is the fact that these remedies are prescribed only because Gandhi perceives of the conflicts as very serious problems and wants the establishment of a society totally free from such strains and conflicts. In his blueprint of the ideal state he reaffirmed that not only in such a society there would be no exploitation but also no sense of conflict. Because of such explicit pronouncements it is less than fair to dismiss Gandhi for his somewhat naive and incomplete formulation of the doctrine of trusteeship ignoring the much more crucial analysis of the unjust modern conflict situation.

In his seminal work, *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhi makes a very severe criticism of modern technology and industrial society. Both are rejected outright and there is no compromise with either. This total rejection was the consequence of Gandhi's conviction that they are primarily responsible for modern miseries. As when Gandhi left India there was little industrialisation, this view crystallised with his encounter with industrialised societies of the West. But in spite of this critic, there is also some reflections of his pragmatism when he concedes that because of industrialisation in certain sectors like dwelling units, people today live much better than what they used to do earlier. But he refused to accept these as indicators of advancement. Gandhi was greatly perturbed by the ill effects of industrialisation and primarily because it leads to increasing inequality. In this assertion there is a striking parallel between his analysis and Marx's rejection of Adam Smith's thesis.

Smith was aware that in modern industrialised capitalistic

order there was increasing inequality. But he dismissed it as inconsequential because in spite of greater inequality there was more for everybody to consume on the basis of increased production. Smith declared in a famous passage, that "common day labourer in Britain or in Holland" not only produced much more than the most respected and active savages but also his "luxury is much superior to that of many an Indian (American Indian) prince, the absolute master of the lives and liberties of a thousand naked savages."

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Rejecting this contention Marx contended that since there were no absolute standards of judging inequality, poverty or for that matter good living, they were to be assessed in relationship to social needs at a particular time and place. "Our desires and pleasures spring from society", declared Marx, "we measure them, therefore, by society and not by the objects which serve for their satisfaction. Because they are of a social nature, they are of a relative nature." As such, though the workers live better today there is a relative fall because of increased inequality. Similarly, in Gandhi the major thrust is about this relative fall. This becomes quite apparent in the Italian example. In this very important instance, Gandhi specifically mentions the working class and the common man and argues that since the present Italian nation do not fulfill the needs and aspirations of these people, in the real sense Italy, i.e. Italy of Mazzini is still under slavery. Contents of independence are as important to Gandhi as independence itself.

"People who have quoted this book (*Hind Swaraj*) must have taken great care to read the book", comments N. K. Bose, "but I think they have missed the most important thing, namely that here was a definition of freedom which had never been given to India before. This definition was that freedom consisted only in the freedom of 'the working class'. I am using his words."

What emerges out of the volumes and actions of Gandhi, in spite of many inconsistencies and paradoxes which is bound to baffle any commentator, is a rebel who wants a total reconstruction of politics and society, as the prevailing order is based on two major evils of conflict and inequality. If Gandhi is understood in this way in his own way, then the essential Gandhi emerges quite clearly; like Rousseau as a critic of contemporary society.



Nehru's socialist creed was eclectic; it drew not only upon Marxism, but also upon the humanist tradition of western liberalism which he had imbibed in his youth, and upon the ethical framework of Gandhi. It rejected regimentation and violence.

by B. R. Nanda (1)

to his socialist faith. The debate has often suffered from a failure to understand the nuances of Nehru's thought as well as the political and social milieu in which he had to act. This richly documented and well-arranged volume by R. C. Dutt, a former senior civil servant, seeks to provide the historical context in which we can analyse Nehru's approach to socialism.

Jawaharlal dramatically avowed his socialist faith in his presidential speech at the Lahore session of the Indian National Congress in December 1929. Nearly two years before the Lahore Congress, in February 1927, while he was in Europe for the treatment of his ailing wife, Nehru had an opportunity of meeting anti-imperialists and radicals from Asia, Africa and Europe at the Brussels "Congress of Oppressed Nationalities". In November 1927, he made a brief trip to Moscow and was tremendously impressed by what he saw of the constructive side of the Soviet experiment, the massive and planned assault on poverty, disease and illiteracy, the stupendous push towards industrialisation and away from cramping custom and obscurantism.

### Shame And Sorrow

Important as his experiences in 1927 were, his socialist ideas had deeper roots. In his Cambridge days he had breathed the liberal air of pre-1914 Europe and been attracted to Fabianism. In 1907 he had been delighted with a lecture by Bernard Shaw on "Socialism and the University Man". His main driving force in these years was a passionate nationalism which found a focus only with the advent of Gandhi on the Indian political stage. It was the influence of the Mahatma and the participation in the non-cooperation movement which rubbed off much of his anglicism and aloofness and made his encounter with the peasants of Pratapgarh in the summer of 1920 such a memorable experience. He was, to use the words of his autobiography, "filled with shame and sorrow, shame at my own easy-going and comfortable life... sorrow at the degradation and overwhelming poverty of India." He turned his jail terms to good account; among the many books he read in jail were some on Marx, Lenin, and the Russian Revolution. His socialist thinking acquired concrete ideas for incorporation in the Congress creed.

Two months after the Lahore Congress, early in 1930, he outlined a programme before the U. P. Congress which included state

ownership of the principal industries, elimination of all intermediary between the cultivators of land and the state, the annulment of agricultural indebtedness, the formation of producers' and consumers' cooperatives, a minimum income for all workers, and steeply-taxed. A year later, in March, at the Karachi session of the Congress, he was the moving spirit behind a resolution piloted by Gandhi himself, in which the Congress declared that political freedom must include, real economic freedom of the "starving millions", and listed some fundamental rights of the working masses, which any future Indian constitution must guarantee. It was a triumph for Jawaharlal, though the Congress did not go as far as he would have liked it to go.

The Karachi Congress was held during the brief truce brought about by the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. By the end of the year, the Congress was outlawed and faced with a massive repression. During the next three years, Nehru was mostly in jail, civil disobedience wilted under the hammer blows of the government and there were signs of division and demoralization in the nationalist ranks. With further reading and reflection in jail, Nehru's socialist convictions acquired a keener edge. In an essay, "Whither India?" from which R. C. Dutt quotes extensively, Nehru expressed his faith that India was "destined to march to the great human goal of social and economic equality".

Nehru soon discovered that to envisage a utopia in the solitude of the prison cell was one thing; to work for it in the wide world outside was another. The Indian National Congress had been always a common political platform for different regions, communities, classes and castes. Gandhi had widened its base, but the Congress was not a workers' or peasants' party; its leaders were convinced that it required all its energies to hold out against the imperialist forces and their allies. All talk of reconstructing Indian society and and left, with Right. Gandhi was no defender of the status quo, whether in the political or social spheres, but he wanted the Congress to remain a strong and effective instrument in the fight against the British. Gandhi himself had sponsored Nehru for the Congress presidency in 1936; he told Nehru at the height of the crisis: "You are in office by their (other Congress leaders') unanimous choice, but you are not in power yet... To put you in office was an attempt to put you in power quicker than you would otherwise have been." Gandhi assured an English correspondent that however "extreme... in presentation of methods", Nehru would be "sober in action", and not precipitate a conflict. Nehru realized the indispensability of the Mahatma's leadership and did not press his differences to an open breach.

Nehru's tactical flexibility was facilitated by the fact that his commitment to socialism had never been doctrinaire. The Marxist interpretation of history and the communist ideal appealed to him

but his socialist faith was never frozen in a dogma. R. C. Dutt cites a remarkable passage from one of Nehru's speeches to the Indian Parliament in 1956: Marx was a great man and everybody could profit by his teaching. But I am told what he said about England one hundred or one hundred and fifty years ago is to be applied to India or any other country? It is completely unjust to Marx, if to nobody else. The socialism of Marx — not all the ideas of Marx — was completely out of place today because the technological aspect had changed in a tremendously rapid way so that the conclusions of Marx do not apply today.

Nehru's socialist creed was eclectic; it drew not only upon Marxism, but also upon the humanist tradition of western liberalism which he had imbibed in his youth, and upon the ethical framework of Gandhi. It rejected regimentation and violence. With a better knowledge of the balance of forces in the Congress party and in the country, Nehru came to the conclusion that even the socialist programme must fit in with the paramount objective of preserving national cohesion. "There are many disruptive forces already in the country," he pleaded with Subhas in Bose in 1939, "and it is not right to add to them."

### Challenge For Nehru

Before 1947 the imperative need for maintaining a united front against the British had been a constraint on Nehru's socialist convictions. After 1947 this constraint did not apply, but Nehru found he had to reckon with other and in some ways more serious constraints. The communal fanaticism and strife which shook the subcontinent at the time of the partition of the country, the mass migrations of refugees across the new borders with Pakistan, the virtual breakdown of an administration whose higher cadres had been reshuffled on a communal basis, the scarcity of food and the necessities of life, the accentuation of inflationary pressures inherited from the war period, the re-organisation of the armed forces, the problem of integrating 500-odd princely states in the Indian Union, the crisis in Hyderabad and the conflict with Pakistan over Kashmir — all these added up to a formidable challenge for Nehru's government during the first years of independence.

And as if this was not enough, the international situation was complicated by the cold war between U.S.A. and USSR. It was a matter of the utmost importance for Nehru and his colleagues to restore the authority of the government and the health of the economy, if only to disprove the prophets of doom like Winston S. Churchill, who had warned that

and disruption." As R. C. Dutt points out in this book, Jayaprakash Narayan conceded many years later that Nehru had been right in not imposing a socialist programme, as a forcible imposition in those early years would have led "not to socialism but in totalitarianism".

NEHRU: By R. C. Dutt (Abhinav Publications, New Delhi, Rs. 80).

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ONE could call the book\* under review a passage across an India besieged by myriads of tensions—racial, regional, religious and linguistic—which threaten her integration. It is neither a politician's angry polemic nor an academic's cold analysis but the cri de coeur of a sensitive journalist who, afraid of losing his heritage in a welter of passions and prejudices, seeks answers in Indian history and the national psyche. Akbar bases his premise on an unfinished debate between Gandhi and Jinnah on the fundamental unity of India in the midst of an apparent diversity. Jinnah's two-nation theory won a Pyrrhic victory in 1947 to be washed in the blood of the makers of Pakistan—both East and West—within three decades. The cry for Khaistan (which also means, like Pakistan, the land of the pure) has raised the spectre of divisiveness again. The assassination of Mrs Gandhi, on the one hand, and the alienation of the Sikh community, on the other, have made Akbar's queries very urgent. Can we resist the siege from within? Was the Mahatma right after all?

The author asks once again whether the existence of Pakistan was necessary in the first place. It would be wrong to assume, however, that the two-nation theory emerged fully armed from Jinnah's mind like Minerva out of Zeus's brow. The fundamentalist Wahabi movement came as a premonition as early as the 1830's. Hunter and Colvin laid its conceptual basis in the 1870s. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan of Aligarh talked of two nations in 1888. It was not Golwalkar but Dayananda, the founder of the Arya Samaja, who countered Muslim fundamentalism with suddhi, cow protection and the nagri pracharini movements. Hindus, too, contributed through fin de siècle revivalism, redolent with Aryan glory, Puranic imagery and Maratha memory. The Morley-Minto reforms, in search of "a counterpoise to Congress aims", planted the dragon seed of the communal electorate in 1909, which yielded the harvest of Pakistan in 1947.

How could the minority leadership of the League manage to sell the thesis of Hindu domination? Akbar rightly stresses the role of feudal landowners and obscurantist ulemas, who had everything to lose from the victory of the Congress ideology of a secular, democratic and economically progressive state. But Akbar ignores the backlash of Khilafat and has not dealt with communalism from below. A reading of the Templewood papers would have shown how the Muslim position was being officially promoted. As David Page writes, "The Communal Award makes Muslim Raj in Punjab and Bengal a real possibility".

Yet the elections of 1937 proved the League to be "a Muslim party without a Muslim support", with no footing in Punjab, Sind, NWFP and Bengal. Jinnah's terms for a coalition in U.P. read strangely in these circumstances. But if Gandhi was not allowing the Congress to be a Hindu party, he was not going to allow Jinnah to treat all Muslims as "private property". It seems that Jinnah did not know where to turn till the landlord-ulema on the one hand and the Government on the other baled him out. The difficulties of the

India: The Siege Within. By M. J. Akbar (Penguin, £2.95).

pre-eminence of the Khalsa, and "special rights as a nation" implying a theocratic sub-state within a secular state. It has

war years and the intransigence of the Congress made Jinnah Quaid-e-Azam. The resignation of the Congress Ministries, the refusal to Cripps, and the Quit India movement paved the way for a collaboration between Jinnah and successive Viceroys who first raised him to a status equal to Gandhi's and, then, made him the arbiter of the political future of India. It was through "direct action", a euphemism for wanton violence, that he ultimately wore down Congress resolve, but only to win "a moth-eaten Pakistan". In the four phases of the newly founded state, secularism was killed in 1952, democracy buried in 1968, unity shattered

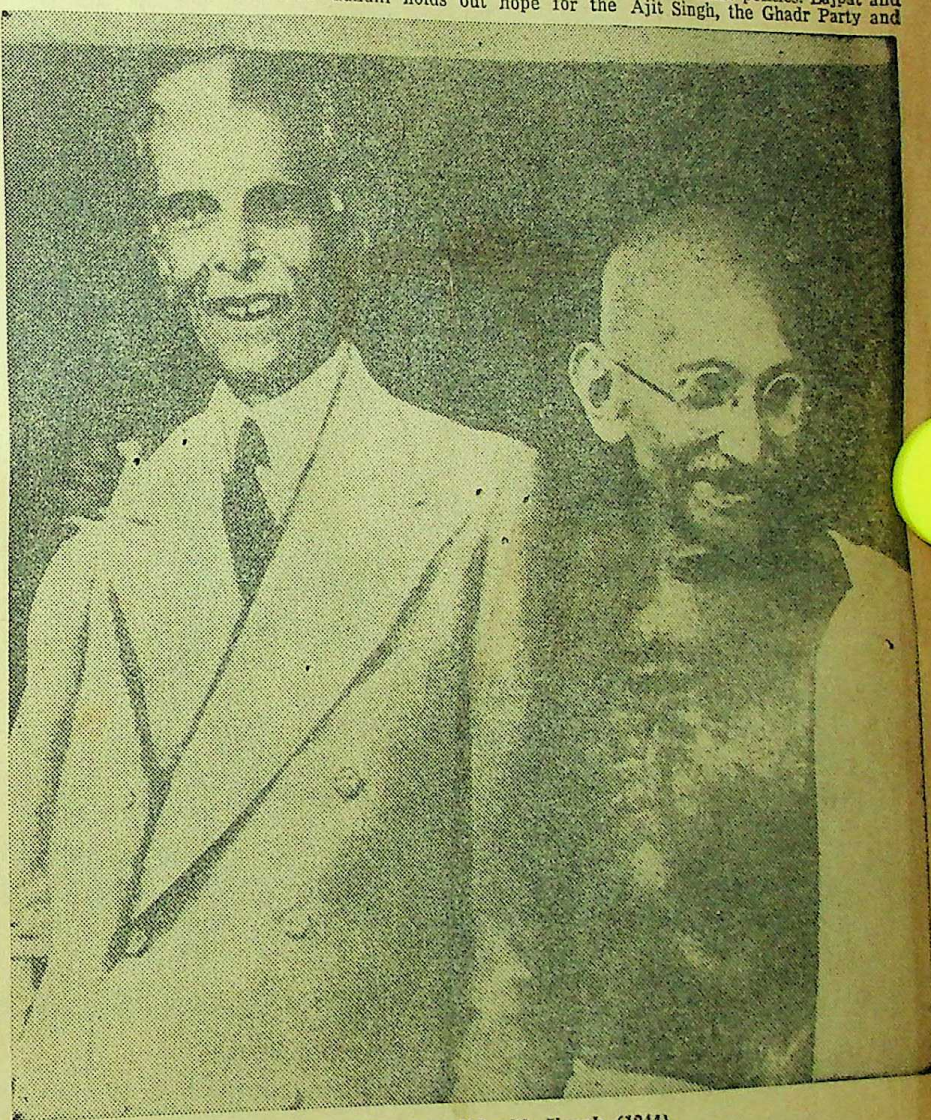
not been adequately discussed by Akbar, except in the case of Bhutto. This "Bonaparte with an ego larger, and an ability considerably smaller, than Napoleon's" almost carried Pakistan into the Soviet camp in 1977. While it is comforting to pursue the progress of Annadurai from a linguistic secessionist to a nationalist after the shock of the Chinese war, it is wise to remember his speech on the Official Languages Bill (1963), distinguishing between an arithmetical majority and an ethical majority. By acquiescing in the Opposition's amendments to the official Anti-Defection Bill, Rajiv Gandhi holds out hope for the

Singh, was shattered by British diplomacy more than British arms, by exploiting Sikh factionalism, although the Raj made ample amends after the enemy passed the supreme test of loyalty in 1857.

It is wrong of the author to call the Arya Samajist movement "an onslaught of the Hindu mind". The Samaj was against certain basic Hindu beliefs and rituals, like caste and idolatry. The British did not always show it favour. In reaction to the Land Alienation Act and the increase of revenue payable by the Chetab colonizers, the Sikhs turned to nationalist politics. Lajpat and Ajit Singh, the Ghadr Party and

# A Nation In Peril

By Anales Tripathi



Mahatma Gandhi with Jinnah (1944)

in 1971, and non-representative government hobbled on till it was replaced by army dictatorship in 1977. President Zia has been recently searching for a fig leaf to cover its nakedness. The author ascribes the move to the mullahs' need for a false legitimacy that will not last. An artificial creation without an ideology, Pakistan (or what remains of it) is bound to be in the Army's hands, the only viable facade behind which feudal-theocratic elements can still hope to retain control, till it loses its significance as a geo-political pawn in the game of superpowers. This aspect of policy has

latter. But he has yet to solve the challenge of Sikh separatism which, in many ways, is an echo of the mullah demand before independence. Khalistan is a basic challenge to Indian democracy, and "if Punjab goes, Kashmir will follow".

Guru Arjun Singh launched the Sikhs on the same course as the Popes did the Catholics in medieval Europe. The church in medieval Europe was martyred by political persecution and the martyrs' blood nourished militancy. Guru Govind's cry of "Raj karega Khalsa" is echoed today in the Anandpur Sahib resolution. The Sikh dream, largely fulfilled by Ranjit

the Komagatamaru built up a base of rebellion in Punjab which exploded in the Akali revolt. The Akalis were, however, skillfully channelized into an anti-Hindu stance by British diplomacy which saw its dangerous potentiality. In many ways the Akalis are comparable to the Wahabis. Their fundamentalism was a sign of their political, cultural and economic backwardness. Neither exposed to Western scientific education, nor to liberal reform movements, nor again to the syncretist teachings of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, the Akalis saw a threat in Hindus

(Continued on Page 11)

chance. If Hindu machinations, down, we must purge ourselves of communal bodies and a totalitarian outlook, before we can do so.



but its strategic importance arising out of its geographical position enabled it to provide bases to the United States. Maulana Azad in his book *India Wins Freedom*, apprehending such a development, had warned: "A state dominated by the Muslim League would offer a permanent sphere of influence to the British." The British have since become the surrogate of America.

How America has acquired, for its own global strategy, a greater and greater hold on Pakistan has been succinctly traced by Hamza Alavi. He writes:

In the higher echelons of the military in Pakistan, U.S. influence became quite pervasive after about 1952, when a military alliance was forged between them. Until 1952, imperialist countries of the West, with far more at stake in India, took very little interest in Pakistan. The situation changed materially after 1951, when Prime Minister Mossadeq of Iran nationalised oil and the western powers realised

Since 1947, with some cooling off during the 60's, relations between the two countries have been warm. The sequence of events, one after the other, only helped to consolidate their friendship. On May 19, 1954 the first U.S.-Pakistan defence treaty was signed at Karachi, resulting in Pakistan's becoming a member of the U.S.-sponsored military establishments such as the South-East Treaty Organisation (SETO) and the Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO). Soon thereafter America became the major supplier of military equipment and services to Pakistan. President Ayub Khan assured the U.S. Congress in 1961 that Pakistan was the only country in Asia where the U.S. armed forces could land at any moment. Though Senator William J. Fulbright, chairman of the U.S. foreign relations committee, characterised this alliance (in view of the strained relations between India and Pakistan) as an "unfortunate mistake", the U.S. Senate and mass media enthusiastically welcomed it.

During the Sino-Indian conflict of 1962 there was a slight shift

further complicated relations between India and Pakistan. Nor has this dependence on America or her allies in the Arab world helped the Pakistanis to become self-reliant.

As Jamil Rashid points out, "Pakistan now provides a model of a country deeply trapped in debt, with limited prospects of getting out." Military requirements are adding to the debt burden every year; it is crippling the domestic economy. As Rashid explains, "In the immediate future the majority of people in Pakistan will suffer — they will be asked to produce more, consume less and export large quantities of goods at increasingly unfavourable terms of trade."

This will cause more unemployment and brain drain; as it is, pulses and rice, which are the staple food of the poor, are be-

a bogey to silence the disgruntled elements. The pattern of governance seems to be the same both in Bangladesh and Pakistan; the same unholy alliance of militarists and bureaucrats, the same unscrupulous unity between the feudal aristocrats and corrupt merchants; and the same talk of Islamisation and the same anti-India campaigns.

A study of the book is an eye-opener in this regard. The heavy mobilisation of armed forces on our borders with Pakistan is as indicative of this trend as the whipping up of public opinion against India in Bangladesh on the question of fencing. The situation is no doubt becoming increasingly alarming; the price that we are called upon to pay is proving far more costly than anyone had visualised at the time of partition.

**Pakistan : The Roots Of Dictatorship : The Political Economy Of A Practorian State.** Edited by Hassan Gardezi and Jamil Rashid. (Oxford University Press, Rs. 130).



# The Price Of Partition

Adherence to fundamentalism is being propagated to cover misrule and India is made a bogey to silence the disgruntled elements.

by Dr. Rafiq Zakaria

WHILE studying the excellent compilation entitled **Pakistan: The Roots of Dictatorship**, edited by two Pakistani scholars, I wondered whether the partition of the sub-continent in 1947 had served any useful purpose at all. It has neither solved the so-called Hindu-Muslim problem nor has it benefited, in any way, any section of the people in the sub-continent.

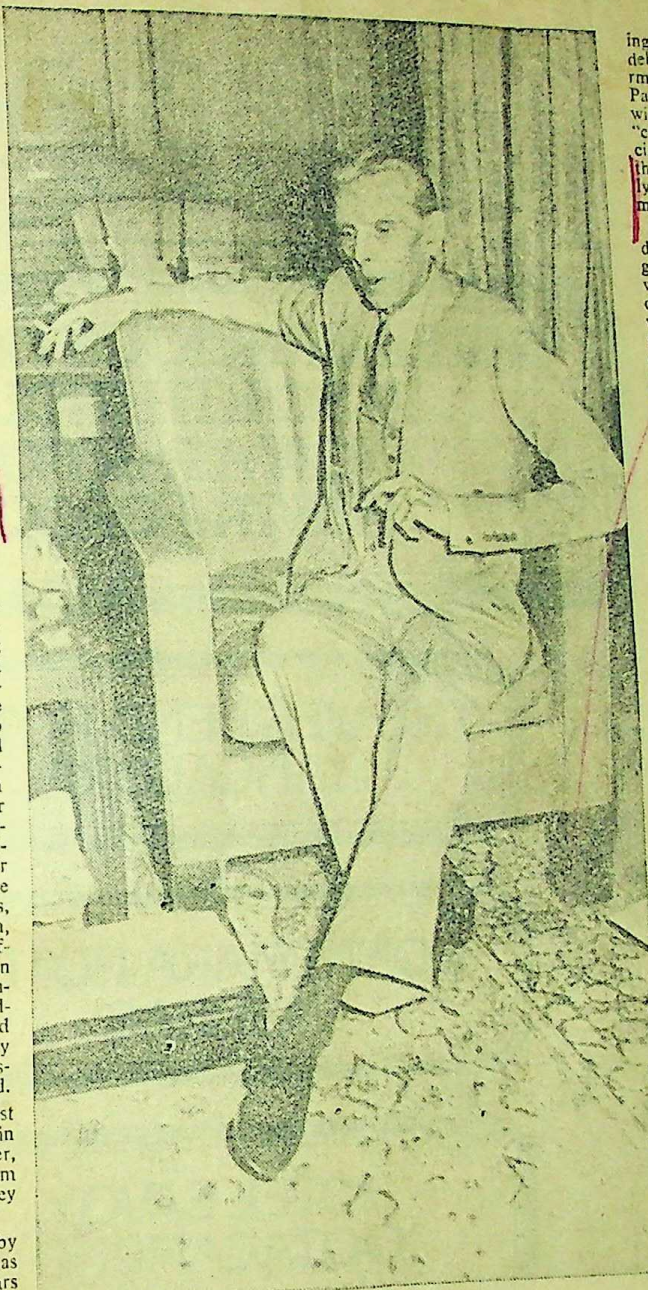
The worst sufferers have been the Muslims; their much sought-after homeland, its one wing separated from the other by a thousand miles of alien territory, could not withstand the test of time. It was divided into Pakistan in the north-west and Bangladesh in the east. The people of these states have not been able to enjoy the fruits of their freedom. They have been subjected almost all through to military rule and many of their popular leaders have been done away with. As for the Muslims, who remained behind in India, they could not escape the sufferings that partition brought in its wake. Though under the Constitution they are not second-class citizens, economically and even psychologically, in many ways they have remained disadvantaged and handicapped.

The Hindus, who form the vast majority of the population in India, have fared no better, despite the democratic freedom and civil liberties, which, they have, undoubtedly enjoyed.

India is constantly plagued by threats to its security, which has been subjected in the past 35 years to no fewer than four aggressions, three of which were by Pakistan. The conflicts within have only been transformed into hostilities abroad. Internal divisions might have been suppressed but these go on erupting outside, posing a perpetual danger to the peace and stability of India.

In Pakistan's case, the breakup of the sub-continent has brought nothing but disaster. The conflicts with India also destroyed Pakistan's economy; this comes out clearly from the various contributions in the book. As Aijaz Ahmed points out: "First the Bangladesh war cut the country to half its size, leading to financial bankruptcy of the state, several economic setbacks for its bourgeoisie, and the collapse of the armed forces both militarily (as a fighting force) and politically (as the leading factor in the political apparatus of the state actually in charge of government since 1958). Second, the crisis of the dominant ideology was immense indeed since Pakistan heretofore the 'national homeland' of Muslims in the sub-continent, now had fewer Muslims living in it than Bangladesh or even India; it had simply lost its *raison d'être*."

Externally Pakistan, in its efforts to gain in the eyes of the world a status equal to that of India, tried, right from its inception, to prepare itself militarily as a rival to India. Within its



THE ARCHITECT OF PAKISTAN: Mohammed Ali Jinnah

that their capacity to intervene immediately and decisively in Iran was impaired by the absence of a strategic base in the area, a role that British India had fulfilled before independence. Pakistan was now to be drawn into playing such a role and a new relationship was forged under U.S. initiative. Pakistan was involved in a military alliance which imposed obligation on it to perform a role within the U.S. strategy for defence of its oil interests in the Middle East. As a result, U.S. military advisers were attached to the Pakistan forces at GHQ, and began to wield much influence directly within the military establishment. By the end of 1953, an Army Planning Board

in this policy, with India also receiving some military assistance from America but it did not last long and the U.S.-Pak axis became stronger than ever before. As Bilal Hashmi observes, "In conclusion it appears that events such as the secession of East Pakistan, the 1971 war and defeat with the imprisonment of 99,000 Pakistani soldiers (finally released in 1974) by India, have considerably reduced the prestige of the military in Pakistan. However, due to the changing geopolitical situation precipitated by events in Iran and Afghanistan, and the Iranian-Iraqi conflict, the dependency relations with the U.S. and the oil-producing Gulf states will continue to strengthen the institutional power of the military and the bureaucracy."

The approach is mostly Marxist, but their analysis is based on a wealth of facts and figures assiduously collected, and it makes grim reading.

was set up to consider reorganisation of the army to prepare it for its new role. An American military survey mission arrived in February 1954, and in October of that year a U.S. military assistance advisory group (MAAG) was established at the army GHQ at Rawalpindi.

Since the Soviet armed presence in Afghanistan, American military involvement in Pakistan has become more intense; but the air and naval equipment, the latest and most sophisticated given by America is more a danger to the security of India than to the defence of Pakistan against Afghanistan. In fact the super-power rivalries in the area have

ing imported in order to pay debt liabilities. But for the enormous foreign remittances of Pakistanis overseas, their country will be in a jam. They are the "core of the government's financial strategy", with the result that Pakistan is being continuously deprived of its "brightest and most highly skilled personnel."

In this book, more than a dozen Pakistani scholars, who grew up in their country but who now work in diverse academic disciplines in foreign universities and institutions, have tried to give a graphic picture of the various phases through which Pakistani society had to pass. Their approach is mostly Marxist, but their analysis is based on a wealth of facts and figures, assiduously collected, and it makes grim reading. They deal with every aspect, from immigrations to sectarian violence and economic recession — how the machinery of the government was manipulated by the feudal aristocrats, wily politicians and clever bureaucrats; how the military became more and more involved in politics and how it then played one set of politicians against another with a view to gaining complete control.

"Pakistan now provides a model of a country deeply trapped in debt, with limited prospects of getting out."

In all this every group has played the Islamic tune to gain a firmer foothold. However, the economic exploitation of the people by the rulers and their efforts to increase dependence of the state on international borrowing is what concerns the contributors more than anything else. The relationship between foreign powers and the ruling cliques is described in detail and its impact on Pakistani society and the state is ably delineated. All in all, it is a major work of scholarship which will be valuable as a reference book on Pakistan.

Though none of the contributors in this book refer to the problems of Bangladesh, especially after its separation from Pakistan, the situation there is much worse. Their economy is in a shambles, their politics in the doldrums. As Mr. Alarf Gohar, a noted Pakistani journalist, after a recent visit to Bangladesh, wrote in the latest issue of *South*, "I discovered that development and modernisation was limited to a five-mile stretch from the Za International Airport to the Inter-Continental Hotel. Beyond that was the world of slums inhabited by the hungry and the destitute. Hundreds of rickshaw pullers, wearing a vest and a lungi, were peddling away barefoot in the cold with not a ray of light in their eyes."

The statistics make terrible reading. In every square mile there are 1,700 persons; 122 out of 1000 infants die before they are born; and yet population has grown from 70 million to 95 million in 12 years. Mr. Gohar was told by a Bangladeshi executive, "We will just have to push these people into the Bay of Bengal to be able to breathe." Mr. Kissinger called Bangladesh a "basket case". Mr. Gohar found an "except for an over-sized bureaucracy, a large army and a powerful middle class" who were thriving, "millions in the villages strive for a desperate and sub-human existence."

Hence adherence to fundamentalism is being propagated in Bangladesh and India is made

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In the nuclear age one of the gratifying aspects of diplomacy is its restrained mood.

by Govind Talwalkar

It is rare to find a minister, a man of action or decision, going into the theoretical aspect of politics — be it national or international. Mr. Abba Eban, who was Israel's ambassador to the USA, served in many international organisations and was also foreign minister of his country, has wider theoretical interests. He is now a member of the Institute for Advanced Study, at Princeton. Eban, therefore, is rightly qualified to discuss international affairs in the modern age in his book, *The New Diplomacy*.

Israel being a beleaguered country, its politicians or even academics are prone to take a view which may not be construed as balanced by others. Eban, however, is an exception. He has a balanced view of things even about his country and a fresh approach to the problems of the world.

Eban has pointed out how the present age is the age of paradoxes. There is an arms race with the superpowers outbidding each other, but military power is surrounded by ambiguity. Conventional weapons and military forces are still an instrument of policy. National states have been strengthened and even among the communist states nationalism is a force to reckon with. At the same time nations want to forge regional alliances. When human affairs were limited diplomacy could offer some solutions. But now that these affairs are very complex and communication easy, diplomacy has lost much of its glory and power.

In the century between the battle of Waterloo (1815) and the outbreak of World War I (1914) 2.5 million soldiers died in battle. But in the three decades after 1914, 100 million lost their lives. Between 1939 and 1945 fifty million people were killed. Even after such a holocaust mankind is not secure.

At the end of World War I it was assumed that the League of Nations was a lasting solution. It was a very facile assumption. In the Second World War western

powers that leaving aside the ethical aspect, Nixon with the help of Kissinger, achieved much more for his country and also for the world than any president in the postwar world. Relations with China were established and because of this he could sharpen the cleavage between China and Russia. Kissinger was able to get a firm foothold in West Asia. Detente was also an accepted policy. It was an acceptance of reality as Russia acquired enormous military strength.

Kissinger went on with a step by step approach as an overall settlement either with Russia or the Arabs was impossible. Eban concludes that the Nixon-Kissinger years are the surprise story of American diplomatic history. Kissinger's writings revealed a deep historical sense and an impulse to evolve new ideas and concepts, but his sombre view of man's political nature and his skeptical attitude toward anything that could be described as utopianism seemed to augur a tenacious de-

its failure and achievements. He brings home the truth that the heritage of Stalinism lived side by side with a new trend of international accommodation. Soviet foreign policy has never lost this duality which brought some significant gains in the Brezhnev era as new boundaries in Europe were recognised.

### The Western Line?

Eban does not see any possibility of the Soviet policy being modified to favour the West. The Russian people have a tradition of stoicism and docility. Their leaders are not obliged to answer every month for an adverse economic index. But economic adversity may compel the Russians to accept arms control.

Eban, one time foreign minister of his country, does not take a partisan view of the recent history of the Middle East. He has objectively analysed the postwar happenings and maintains that the Arab cause in the West Bank and Gaza would

those who want American to announce nuclear war. But he would endorse Kennan's plea of "no first use" declaration from General Taylor, former chairman of joint chiefs of staff. "There is no conceivable hedging against a failure... In any magical exchange, the recipient would create conditions which would make victory a virtually indistinguishable perhaps that the victor survive a bit longer vanquished."

The author is a keen observer of men and matters and his observations about the personalities are very penetrating. Acheson: "Acheon man of many certainties, doubts. He gave the impression of aloofness, sharpened by a conspicuous formality of speech, but he had a sense of personality a penetrating and, on the



FUTURE FEARS: Between 1815 and 1914, 2.5 million soldiers fell in battle. From 1914 to 1945, 150 million lost their lives. Even after such a holocaust mankind is not

### The New Diplomacy : By Abba Eban (Random House, New York. India Book Distributors, \$ 19.95)

powers and the Soviet Union cooperated with each other and it was hoped that this cooperation would continue after the war. This dream was shattered in no time and the world entered into a cold war era. As with the League of Nations, the United Nations Organisation also proved impotent. But the Americans blindly believed in the UNO for a while. Instead, according to Eban, they should have started depending on conventional diplomacy long ago.

Eban's observations about both the superpowers are profound. America enjoyed the position of being not only a superpower but also a mono power for several years. It lost its position in the seventies. As Russia achieved parity with the USA militarily, this was inevitable. The cold war was, according to Eban, a Greek tragedy — a tragedy of compulsion — and not a Christian tragedy — a tragedy of choice.

The author has taken a masterly survey of international policies adopted by various American administrations and rightly main-

tains the existing stabilities rather than an impulse to look beyond them. But this unlikely union of disparate characters left the American policy, after eight years, more thoroughly transformed in scope and spirit than any corresponding period before or since.

Carter's administration met with failures in many fields but that it could bring Egypt and Israel together was a great achievement. With Reagan there is a return to the mood and rhetoric of the cold war.

There would not be any hesitation in agreeing with Eban when he says the Soviet Union was a spectacular success as a state but was a relative failure as a centre of revolution. There is no eloquence left. Soviet society is eulogised by pilgrims from other lands seeking to escape from their own, sated societies into an imaginary Soviet Union. Even the tone of the Soviet diplomats, as Eban says, is practical and not visionary.

The author traces the uneven progress of Soviet diplomacy and

stand or fall by the decision of the Palestinian Arabs. They have so far lost many an opportunity. At the same time the Begin administration was not conducive to peace.

The importance of Western Europe cannot be minimised. The economic alliance between European countries is all the time under pressure and politically they are not united. But the postwar period has put an end to the era of inter-European conflicts. The European community and the Americans have an uneasy relationship but both of them are aware that they have to cooperate. This relationship has come under strain with Reagan in power.

Eban has no blind faith in the United Nations. Though the organisation is verbally abused, it is indispensable. Despite its ineffectiveness, the option of abolition does not arise.

In the nuclear age one of the gratifying aspects of diplomacy is its restrained mood. It is also free from self-delusion. Problems of war and international rivalry may never be solved but they can be kept in restraint. The task before new diplomacy is to achieve this.

Eban would not agree with

benevolent in the use of men."

Dulles: "He to have sense of great ambition that confers great authority and ability. He brought an excessive subtle mind into the service of an excessively realistic view of the world order."

Krushchev: "He was rambling, aggressive, often incoherent, arrogantly even in his world view. He brought the pomp of the superpowers around him, a challenge and seemed to pre-empt adversaries to allies."

Hammarstrand: "He operated to the very existence of something being a reality."

"His ultimate of a man greater than somewhat. He took as Congo expiring vexatious powers and erously, by Union."



# When Hindus and Muslims fo

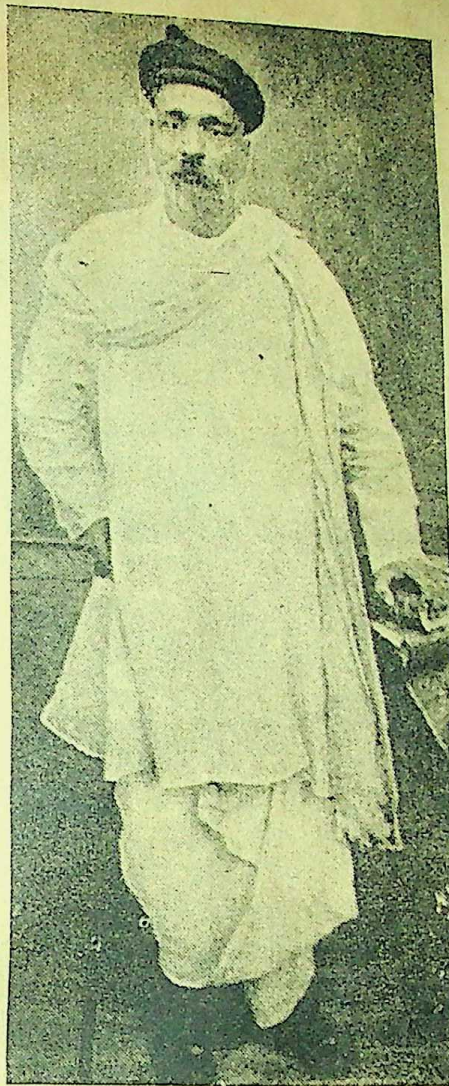
Continued from Page I

gress than about anything else. The Simla Deputation to Lord Minto was a direct reaction to the growing strength of the Congress among educated Indians, including the Muslims. Every presidential address of the League, especially in its early stage, was devoted to a criticism of the Congress, and still, the author gives a full account of the League but ignores the Congress side. This cannot lead to the correct historical perspective.

The League was for co-operation with the British; its leaders believed that that was the best way to safeguard the interests of the Muslims. But the British were too shrewd to give in to whatever the League demanded; they had no intention at this time of antagonising the Congress. Hence they indulged in double-talk and double-dealing finding a delight in the game. Minto — the Viceroy — pampered the Muslims; but Morley — the Secretary of State — played a different tune. In the second volume of Mr. Mohammed's work there is an interesting letter from Morley to Minto, which throws a flood of light on the British attitude. Morley writes to Minto on January 21, 1909: "I have agreed to receive the sons of the Crescent next week. I wish the Prophet himself were coming! There are not many historic figures whom I should be better pleased to summon up from Paradise, or wherever he now abides. Your language to the Islamites about their just claims to something more than numerical strength was perhaps a trifle less guarded than it might have been if you will allow me to say so. But I hope to execute my sword dance without cutting either my own toes or yours".

## A Brief Honeymoon

The honeymoon between the British and the Muslims — for whatever it was worth — was of short duration; the British soon became involved in curbing the influence of Turkey which was then the seat of the Khilafat. Italy captured Tripoli and the Balkan states revolted against their Turkish rulers. Though officially neutral, the British encouraged these revolts. Mr. Winston Churchill, an important member of the Cabinet, publicly talks of driving Muslim Turkey out of Christian Europe. Other British ministers even hinted at a crusade. Everywhere, Muslims were persecuted and harrowing tales of the atrocities against them were published in the press. Indian Muslims were shaken by the British hostility and there arose a wave of resentment against them. There was a near unanimous demand that the League should give up its "policy of loyalty" and become "the feeder of the Congress rather than its drainer". In fact it was a result of this "bitter experience" that most of the Muslim leaders gave up their separatist politics and gravitated nearer the Congress, ultimately becoming its torch bearers. These include the Maulanas — Mohammed Ali, Abul Kalam Azad, Zafar Ali, Hasrat Mohani, Shi-



bli Nomani, Hakim Ajmal Khan and Dr. M. A. Ansari. Most of them suffered innumerable hardships, took a leading part in Gandhiji's non-co-operation movement, became his lifelong associates and presided over the Congress at one session or another. This was not so much a unity of convenience but of conviction born out of the experience that the British rulers were worse than Satan and must be got rid of in the interest of both Hindus and Muslims. Maulana Azad, in particular, hailed this change and after listening to the Presidential address of Sir Ibrahim Rahimtullah at the annual session of the League at Agra in 1913 he observed that never since the rise of Muslims in politics had he heard "a speech so soaked in Indian nationalism."

The British rulers were, indeed, intrigued by this development. Sir Harcourt Butler, the Lt. Governor of the United Provinces, wrote to Lord Hardinge, the Viceroy on April 5, 1913, that young Muslims were joining the Congress and their so-called leaders were unable to check them. Butler's assessment of these leaders was amusing: "Aga Khan is clever but a weather cock. Mahmudabad is

There are many misconceptions assiduously floated by interested parties to give a distorted picture of some of our leaders. One of them has been about Tilak, who is painted as anti-Muslim. But the truth is that Mr. Jinnah found him most liberal in his outlook. And so did Maulana Mohammed Ali. (Above: the Lokmanya and the Maulana)

weak; so is Rampur and unreliable to boot. The Nawab of Dacca hates Aligarh and all its works as much as he hates Aga Khan. The secretary of the Muslim League, Wazir Hasan is a born intriguer and a mischievous fellow... In Bihar the Mohammedan lawyers rely on Hindu clients and have always been lukewarm separatists. Ali Imam is disturbed by the Mohammedans of the United Provinces and the Punjab; his brother, the Judge, still more so". As a counterblast, Butler suggested to the Viceroy that "we should go ahead with the Hindu University".

Then there was the order to demolish a mosque at Kanpur which worsened the relations between the Muslims and the British. The district magistrate entered the mosque with boots on, which infuriated the Muslims. Trouble ensued and the police opened fire, killing many Muslims. The result was that the loyalists in the League lost ground and the radicals took it over. The constitution of the League was amended and its objective was brought on a par with that of the Congress:

attainment of Swaraj. One of the foremost Congress leaders, Mr. Jinnah joined the League and leading lights of the League, Maulanas Mohammed Ali and Zafar Ali joined the Congress. The Tribune commended this development and said, "Hindus and Mohammedans must stand or fall together and if the love of the motherland is a living reality for Hindus and Mohammedans they will allow nothing to come between them". The spirit of camaraderie so permeated both the organisations that the Congress and the League began holding their annual sessions on the same dates and in the same cities so that the leaders and delegates of one body could attend the sessions of the other.

So enthusiastic was the League about united action that it adopted the following resolution: "That the All-India Muslim League places on record its firm belief that the future development and progress of the people of India depend on the harmonious working and co-operation of the various communities and peoples that leaders on

The Lt. Governor of the United Provinces, wrote to the Viceroy that young Muslims were joining the Congress and their so-called leaders were unable to check them. As a counterblast, Butler suggested to the Viceroy that "we should go ahead with the Hindu University".



# When They Fought



A unique spectacle of Hindu-Muslim unity was seen at the Calcutta session of the League held on September 7, 1920, which and Jinnah, Azad and Shaul

Even before the demand for Pakistan arose on the basis of the two-nation theory, we witnessed the invention of two kinds of histories, one affirming the greatness of "Hindu" India and the other tracing the rise of Muslim communalism. There was, of course, a "nationalist" history in between which emphasised the interaction between Islam and Hindu India and the synthesis of the two cultures. However, this proved to be a short-lived affair and, in course of time, it got squeezed out.

It is ironical that the communal view of history has triumphed in an India which has sought to establish a genuinely secular, social and political order. Some of our historians and commentators

have played a significant role in this sorry affair. Dr. Rafiq Zakaria discusses how Hindus and Muslims fought shoulder to shoulder against the British right upto the Khilafat movement. He provides interesting details which may help to view Hindu-Muslim relations in their proper perspective. While he cannot discuss the British policy of "divide and rule" at length in this article, he shows that they shifted their attitude as it suited their requirements. They were friends neither of the Muslims nor of the Hindus. This fact has gone de-emphasised in recent decades. It is time it is recalled because this too is an essential element in a proper appreciation of the Hindu-Muslim problem.

by Dr. RAFIQ ZAKARIA

INDIAN Muslims are gradually losing their place in our polity. Their demands do not worry the government; their grievances hardly taken up by the political parties. Orders strut about boasting of their capacity to influence the government but in this of them has been anything substantial

to better their lot. The Minorities Commission came into existence as a result more or less of an all-parties electoral promise given to the Muslims but its own chairman has admitted that it could do little to give them even some semblance of satisfaction. It is only when Hindu-Muslim riots break out that the plight of Indian Muslims is taken note of. Politicians rush to the troubled area; some on-the-spot in-

vestigations are made; the press highlights the misery of the victims. But as soon as the riots are brought under control, everything is forgotten. In the past, judicial inquiries into these incidents were immediately ordered; nowadays even when such commissions are appointed no follow-up action is taken and no one seems to be much perturbed about it. Chief ministers take these occurrences as of no consequence; they are not questioned

— much less reprimanded. The situation has come to such a pass that there is no longer any discussion on the minor problems; secularists and communalists are both agreed that they should talk more of unity than of differences, less about religious discrimination and more about oneness. Are not Indians one? One wishes it was so in actual practice unfortunately the communal divisions, because of the play of



# From Simla T

General Zia-ul-Haq and Mrs. Gandhi are no strangers to each other. They have met in Salisbury at the time of the transfer of power there and they have been dealing with each other through their foreign ministers, special emissaries and the normal diplomatic channels. General Zia's brief stopover in Delhi tomorrow will enable them to exchange views, once again, on issues of common interest. But not much should be expected of this meeting. Stopovers do not produce breakthroughs.

General Zia is not a simple soldier. He has demonstrated that he possesses considerable political skill and ruthlessness. He is also not a mere mullah in khaki. His recent statement shows that he suffers from a messianic complex. Such men are not easy to cope with, especially when their legitimacy with their own people is in question.

On the eve of the brief Zia-Indira meeting, GIRILAL JAIN discusses the dilemma Indian policy-makers face in their dealings with Pakistan.

IN 1972 when India held 90,000 Pakistani prisoners-of-war and over 5,000 square miles of Pak territory, our policy-makers had to take a tough decision. Should they be generous towards Bhutto, one of the worst India-haters who talked of a thousand-year war with this country, and thereby help him consolidate his position? Or should they regard him as an inveterate foe and deal with him accordingly?

It is difficult to say what the consequences for Bhutto and Pakistan would have been if Mrs. Gandhi and her advisers had taken the second option and not the first. But there can be little doubt that India's helpful gestures — it vacated the seized territory, prevailed upon Shaikh Mujibur Rahman not to put on a trial Pakistani army officers on the charge of "crimes against humanity" and returned the prisoners-of-war without insisting on a final settlement of the Kashmir issue — helped him a great deal. He could claim to be a miracle-worker precisely because Mrs. Gandhi had chosen to be generous.

Mrs. Gandhi has quite a role in himself. has dealt with rulers a God but not with one roles in himself.

Having secured the concessions, Bhutto did precious little to open a new and happier chapter in Indo-Pakistan relations. He went through the motions of formally absorbing the so-called Azad Kashmir into Pakistan and thereby converting the line of control into an international border. But he did not go ahead with the move. We cannot say whether he was forced to retreat by the opposition or whether he was only trying to fool us. The latter possibility cannot be dismissed. He himself boasted, (according to Mohammad Yunus), that he made a number of Indian journalists "drink his urine", which is a vulgar way of saying that he had taken them for a ride.

Leaving speculation regarding Bhutto's intentions on Kashmir aside, we do know that he did not accept India's natural pre-eminence in the region, that he did not give up the idea of achieving parity with, if not superiority over, this country in the military field, and that with that end in view he expanded his armed forces and set in motion a process which has brought Pakistan within inches of acquiring a nuclear capability. In sum, he remained India's foe despite Mrs. Gandhi's generosity towards him.

Since her return to office, Mrs. Gandhi has not been as well placed vis-a-vis General Zia-ul-Haq as she was vis-a-vis Bhutto in 1972. By January 1980, President Zia had already been in power for two-and-a-half years and so did not need India's good-

Zia is shrewd and he is lasted in office for over well match Ayub's 10-y



endurable. for five years and he may



## In Focus

# "I Am God's Appointee"

Modesty is only one side of President Zia's canny and complex personality. The other is the burning belief in his divine mission. The two co-exist, like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

INDER MALHOTRA draws a character-sketch of the General who sees himself as the regent of God on earth.

SO now we know the "truth" about the coup in Pakistan on July 5, 1977 that brought down its first, and so far only, elected government and put into power a military junta headed by General Zia-ul-Haq. Pakistan's President and chief martial law administrator has proclaimed to the wide world, through the B.B.C., that he is "God's own appointee" to rule the 84 million Pakistanis.

It will be wrong to consider this, as some may be inclined to do, uncharacteristic of him. For the truth is that, surface impressions notwithstanding, the remark is entirely typical of Gen. Zia.

There is little doubt that Gen. Zia has assiduously projected an image of himself which is an amalgam of a God-fearing and a modest man, fully aware of his limitations. This is not entirely a pose. As Churchill said of Attlee, the General has much to be modest about. Moreover, from Mr. Bhutto's example he has also drawn the salutary lesson that arrogance or imperiousness in a ruler can be fatal. But this becoming modesty is only one side

of his canny and complex personality. The other is the burning belief in his divine mission. The two co-exist, rather like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

This has been the case ever since he seized power on the strength of a solemn pledge to hold free and fair elections within 90 days through an operation, ironically codenamed "fairplay". The only difference is that he is now hammering home bluntly, indeed brutally, what he had been saying hitherto subtly — that he would not hand over power until a "truly Islamic order has been established"; that his mission was to bring to Pakistan Nizam-e-Mustafa and this must take precedence over the destructive tomfoolery of elections and so on.

Others in different countries and climes before him, ranging from the late, unlamented redeemer of Ghana to the unspeakable Idi Dada Amin of Uganda have also proclaimed themselves to be God's regents on earth. But unlike them, he seems to be doing rather well for himself. Whether this is due to God's grace or his own cunning and skill or a combination of both matters little. The fact is that he feels

secure in the saddle or else he would not be travelling overseas at such a hot pace. Having returned from China and North Korea, he is off again to Indonesia and Malaysia and all this is to be the backdrop to the long-awaited state visit to the United States in December.

In another three-and-a-half months, Gen. Zia's tenure as Pakistan's head of state and government will exceed that of Mr. Bhutto, thus making him his country's second longest-lasting ruler after President Ayub even though he lacks the Field-Marshal's prestige and panache and cannot possibly hope to acquire Ayub's father-figure image.

According to Far Eastern Economic Review, some of his military colleagues, called by his kowtowing to the then Pakistani Prime Minister, used to deride Gen. Zia as "Bhutto's butler." But the Los Angeles Times was perhaps nearer the mark in recording that it suited Zia deliberately to cultivate his image as inexperienced and indecisive in order to null potential opponents into underestimating him. The leader of the nine-party Pakistan National Alliance, who Gen. Zia used for his own purposes, including the execution of Mr. Bhutto after a travesty trial, only to dump them, would agree. So would a

He is now hammering home bluntly, indeed brutally, what he had been saying hitherto subtly — that he would not hand over power until a "truly Islamic order has been established" and this must take precedence over the destructive tomfoolery of elections and so on.

This, in view of Gen. Zia's essentially mediocre record as a soldier, is perhaps no surprise. But if the history of Pakistan during the last five years or so has any lesson at all, it is that to underestimate his ability is to take a grave risk. No one underestimated Gen. Zia more grievously than Mr. Bhutto did on March 1, 1976, when he made him chief of the staff, over the heads of at least half a dozen senior and bright peers in the army. And grudgingly did the flamboyant Zia pay for this folly.

Gen. Chisti, neatly ousted out of the army as a revenge he could not bring wily chief was put in charge of the Rawalpindi black the only office to structure been elected." No wonder the come who once thought's been a sawdust general two Thomas in unison gone balance between scenes tish comedian is: been taking him a le perhaps a trifle I gat

it came at a time when the nation was "celebrating" the tenth anniversary of his rise to power — appears more surprising than it really is. But that is a different story. Here we are concerned mainly with Gen. Zia's personality and with exploring what kind of a man he really is.

Like most men in power, he is a bundle of contradictions. There can be no two opinions about the genuineness of his devoutness though it often borders on fanaticism and obscurantism. All Muslims are required to pray five times a day. He offers an extra, sixth Namaz, which in Islam is voluntary, interrupting his sleep every night. Not the slightest personal scandal attaches to him. His manners are impeccable and he treats with elaborate courtesy all his visitors, especially those from this country. As far as is known he has never lost his temper or raised his voice in public.

And yet, all this did not prevent him from conniving at, if not actually engineering, Mr. Bhutto's judicial murder. Nor is he inclined to let Mrs. Nusrat

Bhutto go to Europe for medical treatment though her life is gravely imperilled. Similarly, large-scale arrests, public floggings, cutting off of hands and so on are not what God-fearing men, leave alone God's regents, ought to indulge in. For Gen. Zia all these and more have become both a creed and an instrument of state policy.

Ironically, even in harrying and hounding his opponents, Gen. Zia skilfully exploits the contrast between his repression and that by Mr. Bhutto who had the inexcusable habit of garnishing his harshness with sadism and bestiality.

The story goes that at a press conference in Lahore last year, Gen. Zia dealt with a journalist, determined to ask him rude questions, by gently telling him: "Son, you can go home and sleep comfortably. Nothing would happen to you. In Mr. Bhutto's time you

would not have got away with your behaviour."

So much for Gen. Zia's skill or pluck. But the point must be made that he has also been remarkably lucky. And luck, as Napoleon never tired of saying, is a General's most important attribute. Pakistan's economy has done rather well in recent years. The General's maladroitness and hopelessly divided opponents have also helped him stay in power. The best stroke of luck to come his way, however, has been the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. Before this event, Gen. Zia was an international pariah. Since then he has been ardently wooed by the United States, China and many other countries. From then on, he has, in fact, never looked back.

In view of his latest pronouncement about the divine origin of his political mandate, it is easy to see why Gen. Zia has always

discerned in Mr. Morarji Desai a kindred soul.

When he met Mrs. Gandhi at Salisbury at the time of Zimbabwe's independence, the General went on talking about Mr. Desai at such great length that he had to be reminded that Mr. Desai was no longer in charge of the Government in India. The General later told Mr. Kuldeep Navar that he could not trust Mrs. Gandhi. Indeed, he added, how could he after her role in "Pakistan's dismemberment in 1971".

It is greatly to be hoped that he would be more discreet at the brief, bilateral summit in Delhi on Monday. For, despite his flawless manners, Gen. Zia can sometimes be astonishingly tactless. For instance, his advisers in the Pakistan foreign office still blanch when reminded of his off-the-cuff remarks on the northern territories of Gilgit, Hunza and Skardu.

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and Delhi is once more back at its creaking, filthy, corroding, dusty, thirsty and power-breakdown best.

by Melville de Mellow

THESE days, I repeatedly find myself haunted by the trite phrase, "Once upon a time..."

As you drive around Delhi, weaving your way round heaps of road-metal — potholes the size of bomb craters, and dug-up roads unmarked by warning lights or caution signs, you hark back to the recent past when things were so different.

There was Asiad '82, CHOGM and NAM. In honour of NAM, some streets got new names and Delhi, old and new, was transformed. This newly developed beauty and tidiness was frequently beyond the reach of words. Overnight, this garden city became a place of elegant refinement. Twenty-five roads underwent a facelift and if you put these roads end to end, they would have produced a single lane 160 kms long!

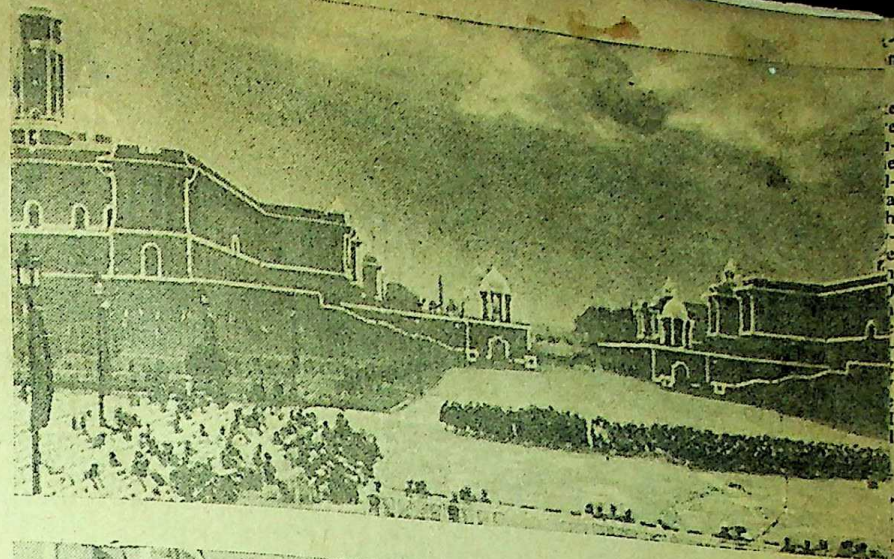
Behind the big NAM welcome were 5,000 dedicated people — the entire work-force of NDMC. Delhi's transformation was achieved in seven days flat! The will to succeed was there.

Necklaces of coloured silk-banners spangled the city, velvet-neat grass and flowerbeds seemed to sprout overnight. Ancient monuments were spruced up and bunting alone gobbled up 20,000 metres of cloth, each single bunting consuming a hundred metres of silk satin. Five thousand flagpoles punctuated the ceremonial route from Palam to the five-star hotels, and 25 major roads were transformed into fragrant corridors of friendship and cordiality. The ten floral arches, used up four metric tonnes of flowers, which were changed every third day. The gardens of Old and New Delhi surrendered all their blooms for this task — but the offerings were inadequate and more had to be brought in from the gardens of neighbouring states.

Seventy-five fountains played and splashed from eight in the morning to nine at night. Five-thousand flagpoles — 3,000 cubic feet of red bajri — 1,500 quintals of whitewash, and 5,000 litres of paint, plus a thousand welcome logos contributed to the picture-book welcome. There was sixteen-hour scavenging operated by a mechanical sweeper. Beggars and leprosy-maimed men and women disappeared overnight.

On the lush manicured lawns of Connaught Place brass bands formed from 5.30 to 7.30 each evening. The roundabouts were transformed into miniature flower gardens. Everything seemed to start with the eye and every day was a triumph for the planners. Automatic sprinklers consumed 20,000 litres of water each day just settling the dust. Clusters of potted plants—10,000 of them, contributed to the blaze of colour and the greening of the capital. The facelift campaign reached out to every kiosk, "piao" and "dhaba" in a rare burst of city pride. Cleanliness was the watchword. "Love your city" was the slogan staring down at you from the billboards. Today, that slogan sounds like a cruel joke.

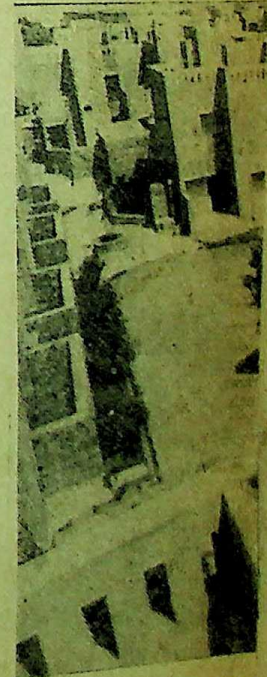
During NAM, Delhi slaked its thirst on 600,000 litres of water a day. 20,000 litres of this was reserved for the carparks at the rear of Vigyan Bhavan, a particularly dusty track. A central control room in the New Delhi Town Hall was fed minute-to-minute information on the health and pulse of India's capital, by five satellite sub-control rooms. Half-a-dozen flying squads tour-



was ordered and its findings finally reached the member, electricity board. Result? NAM was free of electricity breakdowns.

Comparisons are odious, but the NAM organisers claim that they scored over Asiad '82. Starting February 28, from scratch, due to the Delhi elections, the city was ready to receive the NAM delegates on March 5 — two days ahead of the opening day. Unlike Asiad '82, there was no time for rehearsals or dry runs. In seven hectic days the capital of India was transformed and ready for the luminaries that arrived in droves. The former Lt. Governor, Mr. Jagmohan, set a fine example, making three rounds of the city each day, and paying numerous surprise visits between six in the morning and midnight! On March 5, he made a final round at 4 a.m.!

Even the slums were taken care of. They no longer spilled over and like the new buildings under construction, were shielded and hidden from view by bamboo chicks. All this is now a footnote to the NAM legend. It



is past history and Delhi is once more back at its creaking, filthy, corroding, dusty, thirsty and power-breakdown best.

Half-metalled roads and long hours without power; wedding pandals blocking off whole streets; water shortages; dug-up roads; and paan-spattered pavements are the order of the day. The fountains are silent, dry and running to rust, and the loudspeakers blare out at all hours of the night, invoking the blessings of Allah or Krishna or in praise of a political VIP. In Delhi space is a money-spinner. Where peacocks once danced and sang

ed the city round the clock, removing defacements and obscenities on all 25 roads. These roving trucks were equipped with paint brushes and fresh posters, to foil the depredations of the despoilers.

Electricity and water supply didn't fail even once! This was a major triumph. Twenty officers kept vigil the whole night during NAM. As dawn broke over Delhi, a typical call to the control room would be: "Three pyedogs roaming in the vicinity of the Ashoka Hotel". In ten minutes flat, the dogs would be re-

moved from the scene. The paan-wallas of Delhi, for the first time, sported baskets for refuse. The drains were cleaned. Garbage disappeared before it could accumulate and none of these services affected the normal work- ices of the municipality. Every citizen of Delhi somehow felt that he had a role to play.

On March 6, a day before NAM began, New Delhi was plunged in darkness for just five seconds! On the tick of the sixth second, an alternative line restored power, but the matter did not end there. An immediate enquiry



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# That was Nehru—

## Three thousand years of Brahmin lineage and a century and a half of British rationalism

Nehru had the unique gift of being able to create and maintain national consensus. Till this day people recall that he could act as both the prime minister and the leader of the opposition, and get away with it.

byINDER MALHOTRA

One in this country who lived through it possibly forget the hot dusty afternoon exactly years ago when death laid its icy hand on Jawaharlal, the greatest of all Indians after Gandhi and free India's first prime minister for 17 uninterrupted and formative years.

Mourning for him was so much as to make the mind But behind the unpremeditated surge of mass emotion lurked a foreboding.

Immersed from the melancholy that at the time of his death Nehru was a broken man, a broken shell of his former self. The short, sharp Chinese in 1962 had shattered him and the morale of the he had led, loved and was by. His life's work lay in on the bleak and bloodied layan heights.

Panditji was the first to admit he had been living in a "fake-believe world." But this did prevent President Radhakrishnan, by then a soured friend, from accusing him of "credulity and negligence." The outraged public opinion was not mollified by the reluctant and slow sacrifice of Mr. Krishna Menon. Nehru's own stock fell even with those who had unashamedly heroworshipped him. In a sense, the After-Nehru era had begun a good 18 months before his death. It was a tragic twilight period during which the feeling grew that a posthumous reappraisal of his might leave Nehru's image tarnished and his stature shrunk.

But precisely the reverse has happened. Far from diminishing Nehru's standing with his people has risen. Full two decades after he departed the scene, he appears to be an even more towering figure than in his lifetime.

This is partly because his record shines in comparison with that of his successors, including his daughter, Mrs. Gandhi, and partly because the intervening period has lent perspective to his achievements as well as failures.

What is more, unlike most of this great contemporaries, Nehru remains both relevant and live, indeed vibrant. One has only to mention Stalin, Mao, Sukarno, Nasser, Nkrumah and Khrushchev to underscore the point. Even Churchill and de Gaulle have faded.

For another, though many shortcomings of the Nehruvian economic model have become a major drag on the Indian economy, the fact remains that most of India's achievements so far are also due to the foundations that Nehru had laid. India today has the world's third largest pool of

ed into history. Of only Roosevelt, Tito and Ho Chi Minh can it be said that they are in the same category as Nehru.

Of course, in this respect, as in most others, Nehru is excelled by his mentor and master, Mahatma Gandhi. It is doubtful if any film on Nehru would ever have the power or the global impact of Attenborough's *Gandhi*. But in the colourful pageant of modern Indian history, Nehru marches on, just one short step behind the Mahatma and way ahead of everyone else.

Also a whole generation of Indians, many of them holding key positions in almost all walks of life, has grown up under Nehru's, rather than Gandhi's, magic spell. Whatever little of Gandhi it knows it has learnt from Nehru's prolific writings and speeches. In fact, it is no exaggeration to say that today's Indians are essentially Nehru's children.

It is not that attempts have not been made to denigrate Nehru or, for that matter, to deify him. They most certainly have been. In fact, both the exercises date back to his own lifetime and both have often co-existed as something of a tribute to Nehru's tolerance of even malicious and obstreperous dissent. After all it was amidst a mild personality cult around Panditji that Mr. S. K.

Panditji. No one seems to have spoken against Nehru to Mr. Reid more sharply than Mr. Morarji Desai, then chief minister of Bombay.

Since Nehru's death there have been times when either adulation or abuse has predominated. During the initial years of Mrs. Gandhi's first tenure as prime minister in the sixties, for instance, building of plaster pyramids in Panditji's honour had become something of a lucrative cottage industry. But the trend was short-lived. Soon enough emphasis shifted to a personality cult around her, rather than her father.

On the other hand, a particularly vicious anti-Nehru tirade was launched in 1977 by the Janata government, headed by Mr. Desai, which came to power after Mrs. Gandhi's defeat at the polls due largely to the 19-month emergency she had imposed in June 1975. To denigrate Nehru the Janata went so far as to demolish and destroy piece by piece a permanent Nehru exhibition at New Delhi's Pragati Maidan. Only after Mrs. Gandhi's return to power in 1980 was the exhibition painstakingly put together again. And this became possible only because the original drawings of the exhibits had somehow survived the vandalism, thanks to the fact that these had

India if bizarre things did not happen in it. And a particularly posterous thing did happen near two years ago. In August 1981 the official journal of the Indian Council for Historical Research was suddenly withdrawn from circulation. No reason was officially given. But it was clear that the powers that be had taken umbrage at Dr. Partha Chatterji's review of the second volume of Dr. S. Gopal's three-part biography of Nehru which was critical of both Panditji and his official biographer. The ludicrous ban was hurriedly rescinded however following vigorous protests by, among others, Dr. Gopal. The protest by historians and academics shamed the ICHR authorities simply by asking: "What would have Nehru thought of this idiocy?"

Yet another development is even more revealing. Many life-long detractors of Nehru have suddenly changed tack. Without repudiating their past ranting against him they have started praising him for his adherence to democratic norms primarily to use this as a stick to beat Mrs. Gandhi with!

To say all this is not to pretend that negative opinion of Nehru has ceased to exist in India. Far from it. Many continue to denounce Panditji, often only because of their hatred for his daughter. But as time goes by much of the criticism of Nehru, which seemed valid 20 years ago and even later, has begun to lose force.

For instance, Nehru has been repeatedly attacked, especially by those calling themselves Gandhians, for having forsaken the Gandhian path of refashioning India's economy around its villages and opting instead for industrialisation, Soviet-style economic planning and the Fabian brand of socialism. But the very fact that this criticism needs to be reiterated again and again with increasing vehemence shows that it no longer cuts ice. Nor is this a surprise.

For one thing, whether Nehru's economic strategy and priorities were right or wrong, he did nothing which he had not told Gandhi he would. While acknowledging the Mahatma as his master, he had never made a secret of his total disbelief in the Gandhian utopia of India being a loose federation of self-reliant village republics.

offer a coherent and viable alternative framework and the Gandhian critics of Nehru are being less than honest in failing to admit that if the Gandhian model were to displace the Nehruvian one, India would have no hope of feeding itself unless the rate of population growth was reduced to near zero.

The reaction in Pakistan, where we were when the sad news came, was stunning. People who had never known or seen Nehru began to sob in the streets or to pray or both. Pakistan could not have mourned any of its own national heroes more deeply.

Patil blandly told a press conference in London that Nehru was like "the great banyan tree under which thousands take shelter but which thousands take shelter but which nothing grows." Panditji was furious presumably because there was an element of truth in the biting remark. But this did not prevent either Mr. Patil or a host of other habitual Nehru-baiters from flourishing within the ruling party under Nehru. One has only to read *Envoy to Nehru*, by Mr. Escott Reid, the Canadian high commissioner to India during the fifties, to learn how many men happily ensconced in the power-structure were busy running down

been stored in the National Institute of Designs at Ahmedabad.

Apart from this, the present Congress government has done little for Nehru's sake. Somewhat surprisingly it has refrained from even drawing up a special programme for his 20th death anniversary which would have been entirely understandable, indeed appropriate. In a way, the lack of governmental enthusiasm is just as well. For it indicates that Nehru's place in people's hearts and minds is so much too secure to need bolstering through official sponsorship.

India would not be able to produce such facilities and other essential inputs?

The public sector today may be overpopulated with white elephants. But could anything like the defence industry be set up in India if Nehru had not opted for the public sector? Also are there no sick units in the private sector? Moreover, are problems

refund?"—Nehru.

highly skilled scientific and technical manpower. It is also the third world's second most advanced country, next only to China. It is perhaps true that under Nehru



# That was Nehru—

Continued from Page I

lation growth is reduced to zero through the Gandhian method of celibacy and abstinence and India's defence would have to be left to God, moral force and the goodwill of neighbours. Neither of these two propositions is a practicable one.

The complex and unique relationship between Gandhi and Nehru is a fascinating subject on which volumes have been written already. Some have remarked that Nehru was to Gandhi what "Lenin was to Marx." Nehru himself compared the relationship to that "between Socrates and Plato." Whichever description may be nearer the mark, there is no doubt that Gandhi and Nehru were more complementary to each other than contradictory. They represented not so much the two opposite poles as the two sides of the same coin. Gandhi was India's liberator; Nehru its moderniser.

No, Nehru's fault was not that he chose industrialisation but that he failed to give it sufficient impetus. Industrialisation neither spread as far nor proceeded as fast as it should have or he would have liked it to. Nor could he prevent his resolve to control and socialise the commanding heights of Indian economy from degenerating into what John Kenneth Galbraith, Harvard professor and a former U.S. ambassador to India, has described as "post-office socialism."

Nehru was superb in building up an ambience in favour of his sound ideas but, alas, not so good in fashioning instruments that would make these ideas work and stick.

Thus it was that the modernisation Nehru strove for remained skin-deep. The scientific temper he tried to inculcate also failed to percolate beyond the top layer of the intelligentsia, if that. For there is no dearth of nuclear or space scientists who would never embark on a journey without con-

excellence, adept in the art of realpolitik. Were it not so, he would not have lasted at the pinnacle of power for as long as he did.

Examples of Nehru's hard-headedness in defence of India's interests are legion and many have been cited from time to time. A new one may be mentioned here. It comes from Mr. Bertrand Goldschmidt, the famous French nuclear scientist, scholar and statesman.

There is an impression around that Nehru was inclined to give up on behalf of India the option of building nuclear weapons for good, and that Bhabha was an advocate of the bomb. But while every pore of Nehru's body revolted against the thought of India going nuclear, what Mr. Goldschmidt has recorded is worth noting: "When in 1955, Homi J. Bhabha suggested to the prime minister that India should make a public unilateral renunciation of the bomb, Nehru answered that they should discuss this again when India was ready to produce one."

Those who persist in accusing Nehru of being a stentorian "moralist" would do well to read his letter to his sister, Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit, at the U.N. advising her "not to talk too much about our high ideals", which she had apparently been doing, "because our immediate past and present are not in consonance with these ideals, and we may lay our-

Indian unity, parliamentary democracy, secular principles, egalitarian sentiment, planned economic development, minority rights and other cherished values which give India the unique position it has among third world countries?

The question becomes all the more pertinent when we remember the overwhelming odds against which Nehru had to struggle. The butchery and mass migrations in the wake of independence and partition, followed by the first Kashmir war and Pakistan's proclamation of itself as an Islamic country, did not create an atmosphere conducive either to the integration of 562 princely states, most of them harbouring delusions of separate and sovereign grandeur, or to persuading the inflamed populace that India must be a secular state, religion being a matter of individual faith.

This was by no means all. Several of Nehru's senior and influential colleagues were opposed to the introduction of adult suffrage

Indonesia. Nehru tirelessly crusaded for decolonisation. India's independence, he felt, would remain incomplete until other nations too were freed from colonial yoke. But a man of vision, he was the first to proclaim at the first non-aligned summit in Belgrade in 1961 that colonialism was on the wane and the main threat to the world now was the arms race, particularly the nuclear arms race. Sukarno and Nkrumah quarrelled with him over this. But he stood by his theme which he was never to give up until the end. Tito and Nasser backed him.

It does say something about Nehru's continuing relevance that not only the British historian, Mr. E. P. Thompson and other leaders of West European peace movements but also such distinguished Americans as Mr. George Kenan and Mr. Robert McNamara are today speaking on the nuclear issue in Nehru's language.

Many life-long detractors of Nehru have suddenly changed tack. Without repudiating their past ranting against him they have started praising him for his adherence to democratic norms primarily to use this as a stick to beat Mr. Gandhi with!

Was he a "Brown Englishman" which made him the "last viceroy of India rather than its first prime minister?

sulting the family astrologer; tantra has become as much a part of politics as periodic padayatra. This should explain, partly at least, why India is plagued today by a virulent resurgence of religious bigotry, sectarianism, superstition and the like.

Before turning to a more detailed balance sheet of Nehru's attainments and failings, it may be useful to dispose of some of the myths that have grown about him. A persistent one — arising from his early upbringing in an aristocratic Kashmiri home and education at Harrow, Cambridge and Inner Temple — is that he was a "Brown Englishman" which made him the "last viceroy of India rather than its first prime minister". This is absolutely absurd as anyone taking the trouble to read his will and last testament, especially its moving passages about the majesty of the ever-flowing, ever-changing Ganga, can find out.

Nehru combined in himself the best of the British thought with the best of the Indian spiritual tradition, as distinct from organised religious tradition which he detested, just as he happily imbibed the western liberal values and egalitarian Marxist ideology at the same time.

Arnold Toynbee was entirely

selves open to a courteous re-

On the other hand, there is no doubt that during the later years of Nehru, many of his admirers used to be exasperated with him for not being ruthless enough with those of his minions and satraps who were both corrupt and capricious though their wrong-doing which appeared intolerable then has paled into insignificance compared with what has been happening in the corridors of power since.

And yet with the first taste of a somewhat mild form of ruthlessness during the emergency, the nation's mood and outlook changed radically. Nehru's vacillation, temporising and insistence on looking at every problem from every possible angle were looked upon in the past as an inexcusable weakness. These were now perceived as a major virtue, reflecting Panditji's firm refusal to

in a largely illiterate country. But Nehru's enormous prestige prevailed. India has since stuck to the one-man-one-vote principle though as late as the early sixties so prestigious a leader as Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan held that Field-Marshal Ayub Khan's system of "basic democracy" was better suited to India's genius! Before introducing planning, Nehru called a meeting of all the secretaries to the Union government. All except two of them opposed his idea of setting up the Planning Com-

Towards the end of Nehru's life, Ms Taya Zinkin of The Guardian asked him what, in his view, was his greatest achievement. He replied, after a pause, that it was the improvement in the condition of Hindu women that he was able to bring about through the enactment of son laws extending to them the right to property and divorce. He regretted that he could not effe-

An equally long, indeed devastating, list of Nehru's failing can also be made though two para-

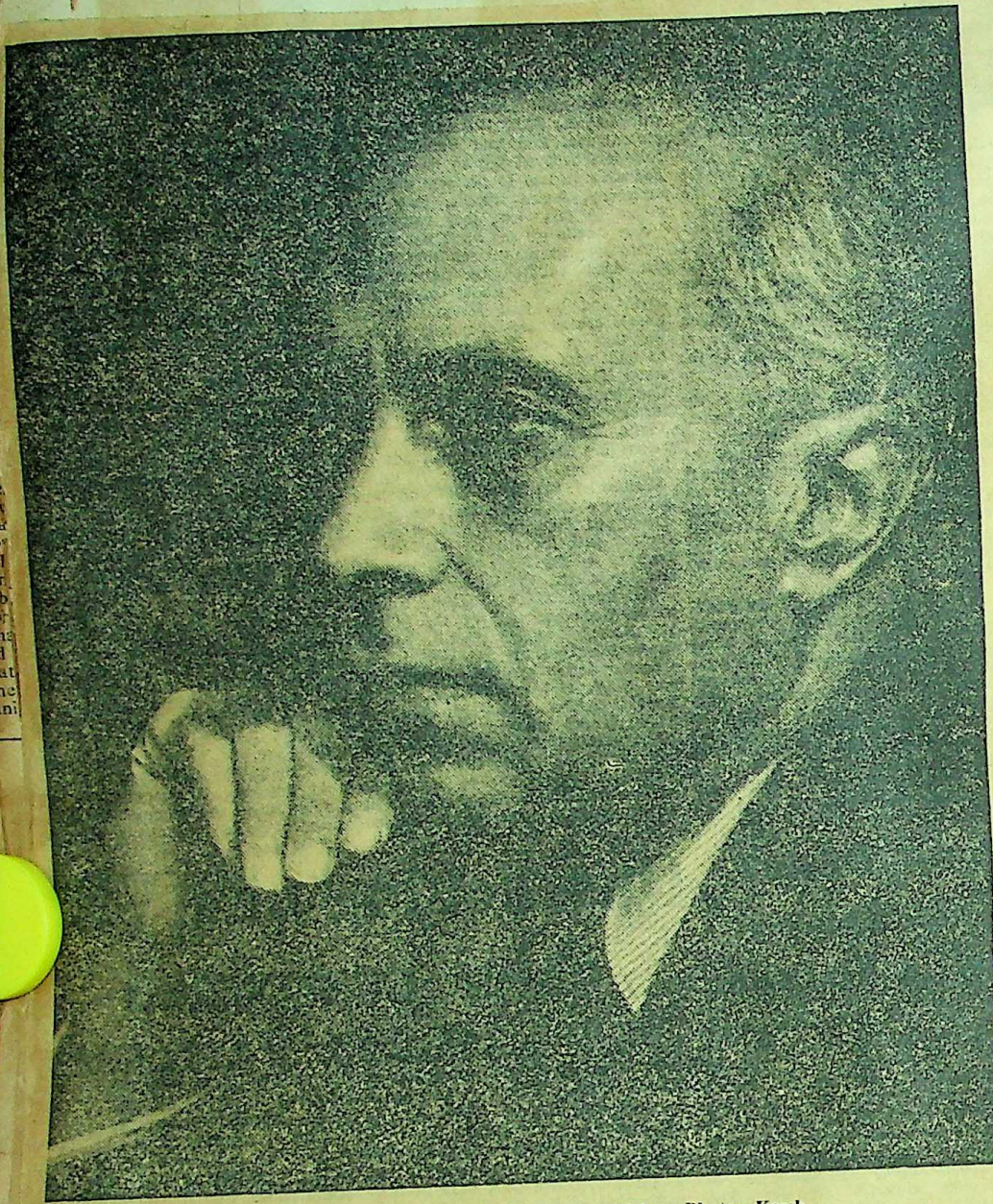
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R. F. MATHIAS





THE GENTLE COLOSSUS: Jawaharlal Nehru. Photo: Karsh.

tences. On the other hand it will be unfair to both the author and his readers to disclose at great length the wealth of material he has marshalled to bring the two issues into proper perspective.

Suffice it to say that on both issues Dr. Gopal, to his credit, has refrained from being chauvinistic. At the same time, presumably because he is better informed on these subjects than most people, he has knocked out the case of those who, in relation to both China and Pakistan, blame this country almost exclusively and happily swallow whatever propaganda line is dished out by Beijing or Islamabad. A careful reading of his dispassionate analysis should prove rewarding.

On China, for instance, he points out that Nehru's biggest miscalculation was that he took it for granted that a major Sino-Indian military conflict would automatically and immediately escalate into a world war and therefore such a conflict would be avoided by the Chinese. It is doubtless strange that someone who had the vision to foresee, before anyone else, the Sino-Soviet split failed to reckon with the depth of Chinese hostile intentions or with the possibility that the Maoists, the principal architects of the conflict with India, would seize on the Cuban

missiles crisis to launch their aggression in the Himalayas, simultaneously embarrassing both India and the Soviet Union.

For the rest, Dr. Gopal's concise and yet comprehensive account of the Chinese hostility and Nehru's cautious approach of essentially avoiding an escalation of the conflict gives the lie to the calumny still being repeated by some that the Himalayan war was precipitated by India and Panditji.

Ayub's view", records Dr. Gopal, "common defence did not imply support of India against Chinese aggression across the northern border".

There are a great many other subjects in Dr. Gopal's book which merit full-length discussion. These include the evolution of the policy to strengthen India's relations with the Soviet Union during which Nehru had sometimes to "override" Mr. Morarji Desai, senior officials of

### Jawaharlal Nehru : A Biography, Volume Three, 1956-1964 : By Sarvepalli Gopal (Oxford, Rs. 120)

Similarly, those who have of late been busy denouncing Nehru for turning down Field-Marshal Ayub's offer of joint defence, would do well to read Dr. Gopal. For they would discover that the seemingly friendly proposal involved not merely the induction of Pakistani troops into Jammu and Kashmir but also abandonment of India's basic policy of non-alignment in order to join the U.S.-led military alliance of which Pakistan was already a member. To cap it all, even before the crunch came, Ayub publicly questioned Nehru's authority to deal with China about Ladakh on the ground that Ladakh, being a part of Kashmir, was disputed territory between India and Pakistan. "In

the ministry of external affairs, finance and commerce and the Governor of the Reserve Bank" and a fascinating, if excessively negative, portrayal of Mr. Krishna Menon as the highly temperamental presiding deity at the defence ministry. But, alas, there is not enough space.

Only two points may briefly be made. First, while providing massive evidence to show that during Nehru's lifetime at least Pakistan's ruler showed no interest in solving the Kashmir issue or improving relations with India, Dr. Gopal refers perceptively to Nehru's "special relationship" with the people of Pakistan who mourned him as they would have mourned a national hero of their own. He also quotes

a hitherto unpublished note written by Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto immediately after Nehru's death in which, after saying quite a few nasty things about Panditji, the mercurial Pakistani leader added: "He was Nehru, the redeemer of 400 million people, a valiant fighter who led his people to freedom and, for the first time in six hundred years, gave them a place in the sun."

And secondly, Dr. Gopal does not shirk from discussing, with utmost candour, Nehru's tolerance of corruption among people around him and his occasional fondness for "flamboyant buccaneers".

Corruption in India today has become a grave menace to the nation, a cancer without cure. It can perhaps be argued that

"It can indeed be safely assumed," says Dr. Gopal, "that from 1946 to 1949, the CIA had access to every paper passing through Nehru's secretariat."

seeds of what has grown into a gargantuan tree were sown during Panditji's time. But this conclusion should be tempered by what Dr. Gopal has to say about the complexity of Nehru's response to the problem.

For instance, Nehru was not aware of Mr. Pratap Singh Kairon's misdeeds. But he stoutly defended the then chief minister of Punjab because he felt that the man who had "worsted both Hindu and Sikh communalism" in that sensitive state should continue to be in power.

According to Dr. Gopal, Nehru's attitude towards honesty among his colleagues was influenced by a feeling that charges against them were exaggerated and perhaps motivated and that each colleague, like Mr. Kairon, had to be judged in the over-all context. "One can put up with a person who is able but otherwise undesirable, or with a person of integrity who has no great ability", Nehru once wrote to Mr. Sampurnanand, "but what is one to do with persons who have neither integrity nor ability?"

However flawed this view, it was not unnatural on the part of someone who had the awesome responsibility of laying the foundations of Indian democracy and providing a framework for the preservation of the country's unity, independence, democratic structure, secularism and planned economic development with particular emphasis on egalitarianism.

In any case, Nehru's own integrity was absolute and transparent and his financial probity unblemished. Dr. Gopal records that when the wealth tax was first introduced in 1957, "Nehru vigorously protested to the finance minister and had the figure raised nearly five times".

This is all too typical of the lovable and much-loved man who is the maker of modern India. Dr. Gopal's book, which will be read by every serious student of Indian history, is an apt tribute to this man. It would be wrong to compare it with the publication of the last volume of his biography, Dr. Gopal's. He ought to sit down and prepare a single-volume magnum opus.



## Comment

# "Shyness, my shield"

It is difficult to imagine a man who came to be known as the "father of the Indian nation" so beset by timidity that at the crucial moment he could not bring himself to utter a word.

by Anna Khanna

**I** STOOD up, but my heart sank into my boots. My head was reeling and I felt as though the whole court was doing likewise. I could think of no question to ask. The judge must have laughed and the vakils no doubt enjoyed the spectacle. But I was past seeing anything. I sat down and told the agent I could not conduct the case.

This frank admission of personal failure because of a deep-rooted and innate shyness was made by a man who went on in life not only to become a skilled and renowned lawyer, but to sway governments and reach into the hearts of millions. It was made in fact by Mahatma Gandhi at the start of his legal career in Bombay; so unnerved and depressed was he by this initial inability to perform, that it was not until much later, when he had left India, and gone to South Africa, that he could bring himself to take on another case.

It is an old story how he subsequently distinguished himself in all his legal transactions at that time with total commitment to truth and straight dealing. Even better known is his original thinking on religious and political matters, and the tremendous influence on Indian national affairs which he came to wield through sheer force of personal integrity. This makes it difficult to imagine a man who came to be known as the "father of the Indian nation" so beset by timidity that at the crucial moment he could not bring himself to utter a word.

In his early days he himself



"My shyness has been in reality my shield and buckler. It has allowed me to grow. It has helped me in my discernment of truth".

viewed this shortcoming with considerable dismay. One of the occasions he recalls in *My Experi-*

ments with Truth was in London at a meeting of the executive committee of a vegetarian society of

lic meeting for the promotion of vegetarianism. He actually stood up before his audience to read out his speech, "but could not. My vision became blurred and I trembled, though the speech hardly covered a sheet of foolscap." And someone else eventually had to read it out for him. His last effort to make a public speech in England was on the eve of his departure for India. He had invited some friends to a specially ordered vegetarian meal at a restaurant at which, of course, speeches had, as a matter of formality, to be made. This time he had not written out his speech but had simply considered very carefully what he wanted to say, reducing this to the fewest possible

words and simplicity is now a pleasure. Its greatest benefit has been that it has taught me the economy of words. I have naturally formed the habit of restraining my thoughts. And I can now give myself a certificate that a thoughtless word hardly ever escaped my tongue or pen.

"I do not recollect ever having to regret anything in my speech or writing. I have thus been spared many a mishap and waste of time. Experience has taught me that silence is part of the spiritual discipline of a votary of truth (...). My shyness has been in reality my shield and buckler. It has allowed me to grow. It has helped me in my discernment of truth."



# The Bullock Cart Culture

Indian science is not in robust health even if it is not incurably sick. It is relatively young, though Jagdish Chandra Bose and C. V. Raman had made their mark long before independence. The resources available to Indian scientists are also inadequate and the conditions in which they live and work are far from satisfactory. Modern scientific research has become so costly that scientists even from leading countries such as Britain and West Germany migrate to the United States because the necessary facilities are not available at home. And it is not true that our scientists have not done worthwhile work in any field. Our agriculture bears testimony to their success in developing new varieties of seeds. They have also done fairly well in nuclear and space research. However it cannot be denied that despite the size of its scientific-technological community, the third largest in the world, India is not among the front runners. In fact, it remains pathetically dependent on imported know-how in almost every field of activity.

Indian scientists have on the whole not been particularly good in empirical research. They have tended to do well in closed systems like mathematics and physics. This is perhaps the result of their brahminical inheritance which tends to de-emphasise the importance of the physical. This inheritance perhaps also explains why Indian scientists have been reluctant to take note of the country's economic limitations and needs, to pursue pure science and concentrate their efforts on adapting the work of others to suit their own requirements, as their Japanese counterparts have done with results that are there for anyone to see. But then have not the rest of us too lacked the pragmatism and dynamism of the Japanese? They are a category apart. Indeed, Indian science is in the state it is in because its luminaries behave in the same way as leading Indians do in other walks of life. In our attitude to life and work, we have not yet become truly modern. Many of us in top positions have come from rural or semi-rural small towns and we have brought what Nehru used to call the bullock cart mentality with us. One can superficially belong to the so-called jet set and yet possess the bullock cart mentality.

The worlds of traditional agriculture and industry are as different from each other as the earth and sun. While the first calls for enormous patience and spirit of resignation in the face of the elements one cannot control, the second calls for innovativeness and the willingness to experiment. The two produce different kinds of personalities. The peasant values a stable order based on the extended family, kinship and other social connections, the industrialist prizes performance above all. That performance, like punctuality, is still not a top priority with us speaks for our true culture even if we wear Saville Row suits and flaunt Japanese gadgets.

On top of our bullock cart mentality has been superimposed the feudal bureaucratic culture. For hundreds of years the important Indian has been the official Indian. This was so during the Moghul period; this was so in the British period; and, above all, this remained so in the Nehru period. Things have begun to change. But still the top industrialist has to keep the secretary and the minister in good humour who do not think they owe it to themselves and the country to help the industrialist to raise production and establish new industries for the country needs. In this milieu it would have been surprising if Indian science had escaped becoming a victim of the country's bureaucratic culture. All of us are cut out of the same block. We can find it comforting to accuse one another of all kinds of crimes and failings because it enables us to turn the gaze inward. But this is escapism. And only a crisis can prosper in the climate of escapism.

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Anyone who knows anything about Gandhiji knows that he was greatly influenced in his early years by Tolstoy, especially by his book *The Kingdom of God is Within You*. But any among our youth would know that a generation of Indians, or perhaps even grew up on Tolstoy and other Russian writers as well. Aldous Huxley and Bertraw, for example, used to be the rage in the thirties and forties. But the Russian writers of the pre-Revolution period made the greatest impact on a particular kind of Indian—the Indian educated in self-inquiry.

Tolstoy's appeal to Gandhiji is easily explained. Both were engaged in the same search for moral certitude in a world where the spirit of scientific inquiry was putting everything in doubt and where the growth of industry was upsetting the old social equilibrium. They were looking for this certitude in religion. As far as we know, Gandhiji himself saw nothing in this light. But in fact the issue was more complex.

Some writers have compared 19th- and early 20th-century Russia with the India of the same period and later. But most of these comparisons are related to economic and political development and the intention has been to find out whether India too would go the Russian way and have a revolution. Relatively little attention has been paid to the similarities between the two in the field of deeper cultural issues.

Russia in the 19th century was exposed to the same kind of unsettling western impact as India in the same and subsequent period. In Russia, there was a fierce debate between the Slavophiles and the Slavophiles, that is those who believed that the country could best fulfil its destiny remaining loyal to its own soul. India experienced the same kind of debate; the Brahmo Samaj established by Raja Rammohun Roy, for example, seeking to accommodate Christianity with the Arya Samaj emphasising the urgent need to return to the Vedas and rejecting all subsequent even wholly Indian developments in the field of religious experience and philosophy as

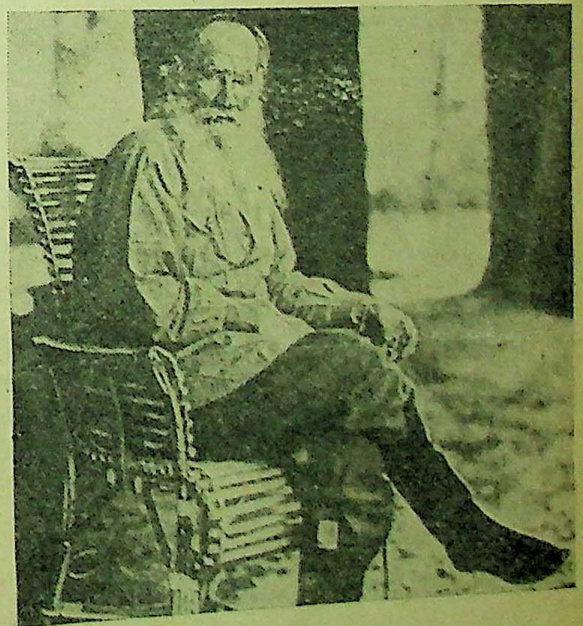
The responses were, of course, different. Russia produced great writers, critics, painters, musicians; for, despite all its differences and backwardness (or backwardness as most people would say), Russia was a member, even if a small one, of the great European civilization. Russia produced great saints and religious reformers; for the Indian gaze was turned inward. Gandhiji and Tolstoy were very different personalities.

Indian youth today even in universities is much interested in these issues which were once possessed the better read among their professors. Understandably enough they have many preoccupations. But it is good to remember and recall the past which must serve as

# Gandhi



# Apostles



Count Leo Tolstoy.

intellect and gives us new insights into the lives of Tolstoy and Gandhiji.

The anniversary of Gandhiji's assassination inevitably evokes a mood of introspection. It really was a perfect death for him. He went out like a flame with the name of God on his lips. Martyrdom is not a Hindu concept. Yet the word is invariably used in connection with Gandhiji's death. I

He was born a Christian but did not die one. He had been a bit of a rip in his youth who was transformed into a kind of Russian *rishi* in the final decades of his life. As a young man he was a lover of the good things of life but became a believer in non-violence and renunciation. He believed in the doctrine of mercy and like Gandhiji detested organised religion.

Both sought religious justification

...the foundation for the future...  
...marvellous, be...  
...We shift then to a safe...

...northeast of India. The...  
...was that Atlee's in...  
...R.D. ...



# And Tolstoy



## Of Love

resistance is in reality nothing else but "the discipline of love" — the supreme and unique law of human life, which everyone feels in the depth of one's soul. We find a manifested most clearly in the soul of the infant. Man feels it so long as he is not blinded by the false doctrines of the world.

"The law of love has been promulgated by all the philosophies — Indian, Chinese, Hebrew, Greek and Roman. I think that it had been most clearly expressed by Christ, who said that in that law is contained both the law and the prophets. But he has done more; anticipating the deformation to which that law is exposed, he indicated directly the danger of such deformation which is natural to people who live only for worldly interests.

"The danger consists precisely in permitting one's self to defend those interests by violence; that is to say, as he has expressed, returning blow by blows, and taking back by force things that have been taken from us; and so forth. Christ knew also, just as all reasonable human beings must know, that the employment of violence is incompatible with love, which is the fundamental law of life. He knew that once violence is admitted, doesn't matter in even a single case, the law of love is thereby rendered futile. That is to say that the law of love ceases to exist. The whole Christian civilization, so brilliant in the exterior, has grown up on this misunderstanding and this flagrant and strange contradiction, sometimes conscious but mostly unconscious."

Later in his letter, Tolstoy says, "Socialism, communism, anarchism, Salvation Army, the growing criminalities, unemployment and absurd luxuries of the rich, augmented without limit, and the awful misery of the poor, the terribly increasing number of suicides — all these are the signs of that inner contradiction which must be there and which cannot be resolved; and without doubt, can only be resolved by acceptance of the law of love and by the rejection of all sorts of violence. Consequently your work in Transvaal, which seems to be far away from the centre of our world, is

M. K. GANDHI

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Telegram: "GANDHI"  
ABC CODE 5th Edition USTD.  
Johannesburg 15th Aug. 1910.

Dear Sir,

I am much obliged to you for your encouraging and cordial letter of the 8th May last. I very much value your general approval of my booklet "Indian Home Rule". And, if you have the time, I shall look forward to your detailed criticism of the work which you have been so good as to promise in your letter.

Mr. Kallerbach has written to you about Tolstoy Farm. Mr. Kallerbach and I have been friends for many years. I may state that he has gone through most of the experiences that you have so graphically described in your work "My Confession". No writings have so deeply touched Mr. Kallerbach as yours, and, as a spur to further effort in living up to the ideals held before the world by you, he has taken the liberty, after consultation with me, of naming his farm after you.

Of his generous action in giving the use of that farm for passive resisters, the numbers of "Indian Opinion" I am sending herewith will give you full information.

I should not have burdened you with these details but for the fact of your taking a personal interest in the passive resistance struggle that is going on in the Transvaal.

I remain,

purpose it serves today, but I then heard it greatly disparaged as well as praised.

"I remember that Tolstoy was the chief among those who disparaged. He said that the Eiffel Tower was a monument to man's folly, not to his wisdom. Tobacco, he argued, was the worst of all intoxicants inasmuch as a man addicted to it was tempted to commit crimes which a drunkard never dared to do. Liquor made a man mad, but tobacco clouded his intellect and made him build castles in the air. The Eiffel Tower was one of the creations of a man under such an influence". One is left speechless — tobacco, Eiffel Tower, but then strange are the ways of savants and sages.

The next reference to Tolstoy is on page 65 — "three moderns have left deep impress on my life and captivated me. Raychand Bhai by his book *Living Contact*, Tolstoy by his book *The Kingdom of God is Within You* and Ruskin by his *Unto This Last*."

The third reference is on page 99 and again refers to the impact Tolstoy's book *The Kingdom of God is Within You* made on him. And finally on page 115 he writes: "I made too an intensive study of Tolstoy's books *The Gospels in Brief*, *What To Do*, and other books made a deep impress on me. I began to realise more and more the infinite possibilities of universal love."

In 1909 Gandhi was in London to have discussions with the Colonial Office about the problems of the people of Indian origin in South Africa. From London he wrote to Tolstoy on the first of the month. He drew Tolstoy's attention to the plight of the Indian population who laboured under serious legal disabilities.

him greatly interested him. He felt that Gandhi was a kindred spirit and on September 24, 1909, he noted in his diary, "I have received a letter from an Indian in Transvaal", and a few days later he wrote to a friend, "The letter of the Transvaal Hindu has touched me very much". On October 8, the 81-year-old Tolstoy replied to Gandhi's letter expressing his sincere sympathy for the oppressed Indians and wishing them success in the struggle for their human rights. He wrote, "I have just received your very interesting letter, which gave me much pleasure. God help our dear brothers and co-workers in the Transvaal. Among us, too, this fight between gentleness and brutality, between humility and love and pride and violence, makes itself ever more strongly felt especially in one of the sharpest conflicts between the religious duty and the state laws".

Tolstoy also gave Gandhi permission to translate his letter to the Hindu, saying that the translation "in circulation of my letter in Indian language can only be a matter of pleasure to me". Gandhi was greatly encouraged by Tolstoy's reply and wrote again from London. This time he sent a copy of J. K. Dake's biography of himself and observed that in his opinion "This struggle of modern times, as it has been idealised both as to the goal as also to the methods adopted to reach the goal. I am not aware of a struggle in which the participants are not to derive any personal advantage at the end of it and in which 50 per cent of the persons affected have undergone great suffering and trial for the sake of a principle. It has not been possible for me to adver-

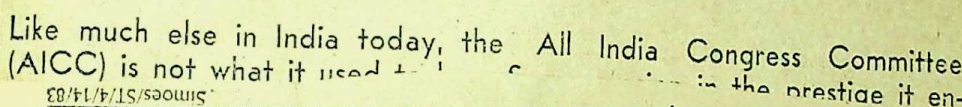
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Eacharya Kripalani became Panditji's candidate, Tandonji that of the redoubtable Sardar. The brisk and bitter canvassing that followed is best illustrated by an incident in which was involved, among others, Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, later to become the Republic's President. The Sardar summoned Mr. Ahmed and other Congress leaders from Assam, and pointedly asked them what their voting plans were. Mr. Ahmed replied:

the front. His work did not sell. He did not care to take part in official exhibitions. His weak health was further undermined by poverty, drugs and alcohol. He was further understood to suffer with an English poetess, Gertrude Hastings, lasting for two years, was troublesome. The only man show of his life organized in December 1917, by Gertrude Weill, was a failure; he who trouble with the police felt that his nudes were innocent and had them removed. As to the influence of homosexual painter and model.

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**DOES THE SUN REALLY BREATHE?**  
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# BAY



At Nasik and elsewhere Panditji had complained that the Congress was talking in different and often conflicting voices. After Tandonji's ouster, the Congress spoke in only one voice — that of Mr. Nehru.

Panditji was still the Congress president when the AICC and the Indian National Congress met in the township of Kalyani near Calcutta, a brain-child of Dr. B. C. Roy. Of what happened there I have not the faintest recollection. And yet Kalyani merits a mention because of the massive cold wave and a virtual disappearance of all food that led to an instant exodus to Calcutta.

The Avadi session in 1955, only a year later, was, however, a major milestone, for here, the Congress and the country committed themselves to the goal of socialism. The exact expression used was "a socialistic pattern of society" which the resolution's

Inside the AICC, however, the dispute was not over the Punjabi suda issue but over the formation of Maharashtra. Since no agreement could be reached on the future of Bombay city, the Congress big guns stuck to the idea of bilingual Bombay. The late Mr. V. N. Gadgil protested and made some impassioned remarks. Panditji was provoked into retorting that those "who wish to settle the issue on the streets will be met on the streets."

It is a measure of the prevailing air of unreality that Panditji Govind Ballabh Pant convinced himself, and also his audience that the hare-brained plan to merge Bihar and West Bengal was bound to go through.

There is no point multiplying the vignettes of the AICC sessions in the Nehru era. But a mention must be made of the occasion at Indore in the fifties when Mr. Mahavir Tyagi, a remarkably lively, forthright and witty Congressman openly complained about the "deliberate downgrading" of the AICC.

He used his privileged position by virtue of being an old comrade of Mr. Nehru to mix some personal complaints with organisational ones. "Our relationship is now becoming more and more formal and official," he said. "I don't like it. Do you remember the days in jail when you were trying to teach me French and I wasn't able to learn it? You would call me a 'damn fool'. That was much more enjoyable than all the formal courtesies extended to me today."

"Tyagi, Tyagi," interrupted Mr. Nehru, "if a man is one-eyed, you don't call him one-eyed in public." The whole House dissolved in laughter and Mr. Tyagi's complaint was forgotten.

And then we come to two AICCs which still cause a wrench. At the first of these, at Bhubaneswar in January 1964, Mr. Nehru suffered a stroke from which he never really recovered fully. Even so, he went about his business without complaint. And it was this sense of duty that brought him to his last AICC session, also at Bombay, in the April of that year, only six weeks before his death.

This was the only time when Panditji had to speak to the AICC while sitting in a chair. He had to be helped to get up and he just could not manage to tie his



It was here (the Glass House in Bangalore) that Mr. Morarji Desai first hurled stones at Messrs. Shastri and Kamaraj. And it was here that the even more fierce stone-hurling took place between Mrs. Gandhi and the syndicate of old

When on Mr. Shastri's sudden death, Mrs. Gandhi became Prime Minister in January 1966, a meeting of the AICC had already been fixed for the middle of February. Evidently, Mr. Shastri had planned to get the party's approval for whatever agreement he intended to or hoped to reach at Tashkent with Field-Marshal Ayub Khan.

As is well-known some parts of the Tashkent accord, such as the withdrawal from Haji Pir, were not particularly popular in India. In Pakistan, Mr. Bhutto was raising hell over the agreement. At Jaipur, however, the accord was endorsed by an overwhelming majority. Interestingly, the resolution approving of it was moved by Mr. Morarji Desai. It was seconded, less surprisingly, by Mr. Ghulam Mohammed Sadiq. Mr. Bhutto declared, "Yehan bhi Bhutto hai" (There is a Bhutto here too).

At Jaipur the seeds of Mr. Kamaraj's differences with Mrs. Gandhi were visible, but faintly.

"Jawaharlal is a man who can never harm a foe and will never help a friend. I, on the other hand, never let down a friend and never forgive a foe."  
— Sardar Patel.

It was basically the classic confrontation between the king-maker and the king. But Mr. Kamaraj was genuinely appalled by Mr. C. Subramaniam's generous concessions to multinationals like Bechtel. Whether he mistakenly assumed that Mr. Subramaniam, once his own favourite was acting entirely on his own, is not known. But after another AICC meeting in May of that year in Bombay, it was clear that the policies Mr. Kamaraj was protesting against had Mrs. Gandhi's full approval.

The issue this time was a far more important and emotive one: Devaluation of the rupee. The public heard of the tussle only after the devaluation had been publicly announced on June 6. The rest of the story is too well known to need recounting.

In the general election in 1967 the Congress lost a large number of states. In fact, the joke then was that one could catch a train in Calcutta and travel all the way to Amritsar without ever having to cross a Congress-run state.

"Do you remember the days in jail when you were trying to teach me French and I wasn't able to learn it? You would call me a 'damn fool'. That was much more enjoyable than all the formal courtesies extended to me today".

"Tyagi, Tyagi", interrupted Mr. Nehru, "if a man is one-eyed, you don't call him one-eyed in public." The whole House dissolved in laughter and Mr. Tyagi's complaint was forgotten.

There was a clamour for an emergency AICC session to discuss the electoral setback.

One was duly held in Delhi where the famous Ten-point Programme was drawn up. It advocated the abolition of privy purses and princely privileges as well as that of the special rights enjoyed by the ICS. There was much talk of bank nationalisation, too, though it was not until two years later that this became a live, indeed climactic, issue.

The AICC session at which bank nationalisation came to the fore was held at Bangalore which, like Bombay and Delhi, has had the distinction of hosting a large number of AICC meets.

Mr. C. Subramaniam, in a brazen assault on English syntax and inspired perhaps by a desire to recreate the AICC in Gowalia Tank (Circa 1942), coined the curious slogan: "Quit Poverty, Mrs. Gandhi later tried to retrieve the situation by refining the slogan into "Garibi Hatao," which has curiously disappeared from the Indian political scene.

After Mrs. Gandhi's defeat in the 1977 general election and the Janata's rise to power, the AICC still without the alphabet of parenthesis, met in New Delhi at Sapru House. Those of its followers who had earlier fawned on her but now thought that was on the run were in a







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Jinnah and the League it appeared that the British and the Congress were slipping back into the belief that they could together settle the future of India without concessions to the Muslims. August 16, 1946 was therefore fixed by the League as "direct action" day. In most of India it passed off without violence but in Calcutta there started that day an uncontrollable mass slaughter that spread across most of northern India and lasted for the next 16 months.

Continuing excerpts from Brian Lapping's "End of Empire".

THE Cabinet mission failed to secure agreement either on the final form of a constitution for independent India or on the immediate steps: designating a constitution-making body to take over the task and itself to draw up the details, and designating an interim government to run India while constitutional arrangements for independence were worked out. The mission looks in retrospect like a waste of three months. But these months convinced everybody in India that the British were now really determined to go. Attlee, back in London, closely supervised the mission's efforts and learned from them that a more telling form of persuasion was needed to make the Indians get their house (or houses) in enough order for the British to leave.

It was not the British, however, but Jinnah who introduced a new form of persuasion: a deliberate provocation of violence. He complained that the Congress had dishonestly backed away from the Cabinet mission compromise because they wanted complete power at the centre, without even the concession of groups of Muslim provinces allowed to federate beneath the all-India umbrella. He also thought he was misled over events following the Cabinet mission's departure. The viceroy formed a short-term interim government of officials only where Jinnah thought that the League, having accepted the mission's proposals, would be included in a government of political leaders.

### "Unfortunate" Event

Then Nehru, newly appointed as Congress president, announced that in the forthcoming constituent assembly, the constitution-making body, the Congress would not consider itself bound by any prior agreements, even though the League had agreed to take part in the assembly only if all parties were bound by agreements they had reached with the Cabinet mission. Nehru's statement was later described by Azad as "one of those unfortunate events which change the course of history".

To Jinnah and the League it appeared that the British and the Congress were slipping back into the belief that they could together settle the future of India without concessions to the Muslims. The League therefore turned to "direct action". Both the British and the Congress, Jinnah explained, had held pistols at his head: "Today we also have forged a pistol and are in a position to use it... This day we bid goodbye to constitutional methods." August 16, 1946 was fixed by the League as "direct action day".

In most of India it passed off without violence. But the Muslim League government in Bengal, led by H. S. Suhrawardy, declared August 16 a public holiday. Bengal had been India's principal centre of political violence for decades. No sane government, knowing the widespread sense of outrage that Jinnah and the League had stimulated among Muslims at the notion that Congress had crossed them in

an effort to secure a Hindu raj, could have doubted that to make the League's direct action day a public holiday in Bengal was to invite trouble — an opportunity for Muslims to show that they were not to be trifled with. But Suhrawardy and his League colleagues cannot have begun to guess how much trouble their decision would release. There started in Calcutta that day an uncontrollable mass slaughter that spread across most of northern India and lasted for the next 16 months.

### Arson Unleashed

It began with the Calcutta killings, three days of murder, unleashed by a Muslim initiative but soon overwhelmed by massive retaliatory Hindu onslaughts reinforced by a cavalry of local Sikh taxi and lorry drivers. When it was over, corpses were strewn about the streets, putrefying in the damp heat of the monsoon. Informed estimates of the number killed range between 4-5,000. Many more were wounded and more still were made homeless by mobs setting fire to their dwellings. When the army were brought in and, after three days, stopped the looting and murder, corpses were piled high on waste plots. A week later the stink of putrefaction still permeated the city, from bodies shoved down drains or ignored in burnt-out houses.

Wavell visited Calcutta and grasped its warning: unless a Congress-League settlement was reached quickly, the killings were likely to spread. He tried to persuade the Congress leaders to take part in a coalition government with the League, as proposed by the Cabinet mission, but Gandhi and Nehru disliked what they considered his "mingling" approach, and he was ordered from London not to risk a breach with the Congress. So, instead of a Congress-League coalition, Wavell was stuck with Nehru presiding over the first all-India government led by an Indian, but with no League members...

The interim government and the constituent assembly both faced the prospect of being dominated by Congress and boycotted by the Muslim League. It was an ugly time. The flame lit by the Calcutta riots spread. Muslims at Noakhali and Tipperah in East Bengal murdered Hindus and burned their shops and houses. Fleeing Hindus arrived in Bihar, where their descriptions of the horrors they and their co-religionists had suffered provoked Bihari Hindus to a mass slaughter of Muslims. Some political leaders, unable to contain their rage, encouraged their followers to seek revenge. Across northern India minorities who had lived safely in their villages for generations were suddenly at risk.

When outbreaks occurred, the police were no longer effective: many policemen were reluctant to arrest men of their own religion and afraid to tackle aggressive groups of the rival religion. When murder and arson occurred in a big city like Calcutta, the army was able to restore order. The soldiers were of all religious groups and held together, obeying their officers, containing

# Jinnah set



DIFFERENT TACTICS: It was not the British but Jinnah who introduced a deliberate provocation of violence.

to act impartially. When the violence was in scattered villages, as at Noakhali and in Bihar, the army was less effective: there were not enough soldiers to protect minority-dwellers in all the endangered villages.

Lord Wavell responded to the spread of violence with a withdrawal plan which he sent to London: if things got worse and the British could not govern, they should simply go, first turning over the southern provinces, where the Muslims were few and violence had not erupted, to their provincial governments, then evacuating the British women and children and concentrating the army in the troubled northern provinces before a final departure. To Attlee the plan smelt of scuttle, a military withdrawal without finding a political solution; it showed that Wavell had become defeatist and himself must go.

WAVELL's successor was an Attlee-Cripps inspiration — Lord Louis Mountbatten. The choice was thought remarkable — he was regarded primarily as a member of the royal family, a leading naval officer and a socialite — but Attlee's dealings with him over Burma help to explain the decision. Mountbatten had been supreme commander of all allied forces in Southeast Asia from 1943 till 1946. This meant that he was responsible for driving the Japanese out of the territories they had conquered. The first of these was Burma, immediately northeast of India. The military story of the reconquest

of Burma has been told often, but the supreme commander was particularly responsible for the political decisions. In a difficult campaign, and knowing nothing of the plan to drop atom bombs on Japan, he needed Burmese allies and decided that the most effective Burmese leader was Aung San, formerly head of an anti-British revolutionary party and subsequently the ally of the Japanese when they conquered Burma.

By the latter stages of the war, Aung San had moved over to lead an anti-Japanese resistance movement and Mountbatten, needing his help, was prepared to give him in exchange political backing in his demand for immediate independence. The returned British Governor, Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith, did not agree. He supported the policy of the wartime coalition in London, namely that the British owed something to those who had helped them run Burma in the years before the war and who had sided with the Japanese in 1942.

When Attlee began to take a decisive interest in Burma, Dorman-Smith's efforts were far from successful. Aung San and his popular nationalist party out of the "Free Burma" movement were calling for "a full sea, land, and air force" for freedom, a civil defence or a parallel government. Attlee could see the potential for conflict and Mountbatten, who had been sent to London, felt that every few weeks he was seeing Aung San's face in the newspapers. You can see the



# s on a wave of violence



power to other leaders of Aung San's party a few months later.)

Mountbatten's appointment as viceroy of India did not go altogether smoothly. As supreme commander he had been briefed by the two previous viceroys, Linlithgow and Wavell, and he knew something of their difficulties. Recognising the risk of failure, he laid down extraordinary conditions: first, he must consult his cousin the King (which Attlee had already done); second, in announcing his appointment, the government must also announce that British rule in India was to end by June 1948 — he would assume office only with the public promise that he was the last viceroy; third, he required a substantial say in drafting the statement announcing his appointment and defining his task; finally, he required to be allowed to complete the job without interference from the secretary of state for India or the Cabinet. Mountbatten was only 46. He had achieved spectacular seniority during the war. Now he was asking for more power than any modern British peacetime government had ever granted an individual.

Attlee had wanted Mountbatten as a new man to bring renewed energy to a basically unchanged policy. But Mountbatten, by his demand over timing, in effect changed the policy, although this was not generally realised at the time. By announcing a date by which they would go, come what may, the British government was effectively announcing something else: that if no agreement was reached between Congress and the League, the British would hand over to the existing provincial governments. Jinnah, having lost the powerful role in a united India that the Cabinet mission had almost secured for him, was likely to have to accept those provinces that opted to join Pakistan. Mountbatten's purpose in asking for a definite final date had been to concentrate the minds of the Indians and make them get on with it. The granting of his request made the creation of Pakistan inevitable if the negotiations broke down.

## No Accord

Mountbatten arrived in Delhi on March 22, 1947. By then an interim government of sorts was functioning: Wavell was trying to get Congress and League to work together as colleagues; the Congress members were trying to dominate and the League members were using office mainly to show how much trouble they could cause. Of the three, the League were the most successful. Their principal representative in the government, Liaquat Ali Khan, was finance minister, and was doing all he could to damage Congress's ministers and business supporters. Abul Kalam Azad later wrote, "Whatever proposal (Patel, the home minister) made was either rejected or modified beyond recognition by Liaquat Ali... internal dissensions broke out within the government and went on increasing." An ICS man, K. B. Lall, later recalled:

The Muslim League Minister, Abdur Rab Nishtar, was in charge of communications. Naturally he wanted to be informed of what was going on inside the Congress Party. The easiest way was for him to organise bugging at the telephone exchange. He got all the telephones of all the Congress ministers bugged, and I'm not sure whether even the viceroy's telephone was not bugged by him.

Patel, who was number two to Nehru of the Congress ministers, became convinced by the Muslim League's tactics in the interim government that co-operation after independence would be impossible. He took the lead in persuading Congress that the

League must be ejected. In effect he had decided to support the creation of Pakistan. But it was to be a minimal Pakistan. The Congress Working Committee resolved early in March 1947, just before Mountbatten's arrival that both the Punjab and Bengal must be partitioned. That way the warring Muslims would be removed from the Indian union but they would not take too much of India with them. "When you get gangrene in your leg," Morarji Desai, a Gandhian Congressman in the 1940s and Prime Minister of India in the 1970s, explained, "you have to cut it off. If you allow it to remain the whole body gives in."

## A Date Was Set

But Mountbatten's instructions did not go this far. Attlee and his colleagues in London were still committed to the Cabinet mission plan for a constituent assembly that would create a unitary government acceptable to all Indian parties, and Mountbatten was instructed to pursue this objective to the utmost of his power. Only if by October 1947 he found it to be impossible was he to consider alternatives. He thus arrived to find his instruction overtaken. The Cabinet still required him to spend seven months fighting for a unitary state when the Congress, supposedly a prime beneficiary of this policy, had given up the struggle.

Mountbatten introduced a new procedure. He decided to resolve the Indian problem by establishing relationships of understanding and trust with the five key Indian leaders, Gandhi, Nehru, Jinnah, Liaquat and Patel. He began with grand entertainments. More Indians were invited to Viceroy's House than ever before. Mountbatten put his all into making them feel welcome. He was a sparkling socialiser and this part of his task came easily to him. He put on his uniforms and all his medals and quickly won personal credit not only with the princes, who had been accustomed to come to the viceroy's palace, but with political, social, administrative and industrial leaders. Many years later Countess Mountbatten's lady-in-waiting, Jaya Thadani, remembered this last viceroyalty:

Everything moved so well because they themselves were both very proficient. He had the German quality of extreme discipline and everything had to be perfect. It was a social household. There were dinner parties and drinks parties. Everybody in that house knew that it was the end of an era, that when Mountbatten left there was going to be prohibition. So everybody was determined to drink the viceroy's cellar dry. That didn't make for a clear head early in the morning, except that Lord Louis, as we called him, and Lady Louis always were clear-headed and knew exactly what they were going to do with the rest of the day. We would follow rather bleary-eyed and often muddled along as best we could.

He was very vain. He was extremely good-looking: he had only to walk into a room and every female heart fluttered. He knew that and he would stand there with a very "look at me" sort of attitude and charm everybody in the room. He enjoyed the way he looked and the ADC who walked behind him would generally carry a comb so that when Lord Louis stepped out of a plane or a car he could see that his hair was in place. In sharp contrast, she never really cared how she looked. She didn't care whether her hair looked right or her make-up. Often friends of hers who came out from England would

say, "You dresses, don't ought to be. She never sort of thing very endear"

Mountbatten's first meeting with Indian leaders was his first meeting about the shared interests and personal matters. The sat in armchairs, in as friendly an arrangement as he could devise. The Indian leader he had by the first to know in 196 when Mountbatten was commander and Indian politician in prison. Officially he was against his see Mountbatten was nationalists and arriving. The two men on, as did Nehru, with Lady Mountbatten.

For the new viceroy was the key. Not the leader of the movement and Gandhi's successor to lead Congress came a close personal friend of Mountbatten in ship that transcended lies' political business. Hough, author of book history and on the Mountbatten in Edwina, his of Countess Mountbatten was "Edwina's only great love". Between two men the close understanding and trust that developed not unparalleled among leaders and their nationalists, but nowhere else. British proconsul need to establish a firm rapport, a nationalist leader. Mountbatten and Nehru liked and each other and frankly the problems and persons of pre-partition India.

Mountbatten next saw Ali Khan, Jinnah's number one, and then, benefiting from his advice, he saw Gandhi. Lady Mountbatten helped to the affection and trust of figure. It was Gandhi's hat walk with his hands resting on the shoulders of two young women disciples. He felt warmly towards the Mountbattens to walk through the dens of Viceroy's House with hands resting on their shoulders instead.

Then came Jinnah. Mountbatten did not like him and saw him as "a psychopathic case". He won unusually warm treatment from the Muslim leader. So took all his seductive. He told Jinnah that they get to know each other by discussing business and their first and second meetings trying to break through the barrier of Jinnah's reserve. Conversations began with Mountbatten voluble, Jinnah tacit and embarrassed, ill-equipped to respond. He had come to viceroy to discuss matters of state and could not bring him to indulge in what he considered small talk. But Mountbatten spoke critically of the Congress leaders and their unwillingness to accept fair terms. That was the theme to which Jinnah warbled. Gradually the viceroy worked his way into the trust of the cold, pedantic, rational but obsessively mistrustful man and only after these preliminary did Mountbatten get down to business. Each session with Indian leader lasted about an hour; he then spent 15 minutes dictating a note, which was usually circulated to his staff.

(To be continued)

An extract from "End of Empire" by Brian Lapping. Published by Granada on March 2, 1985.

duced a new form of persuasion

had been his own chief adviser on civilian affairs in Burma and who had recommended full military co-operation with Aung San.

## Within An Hour...

Attlee summoned Rance to Downing Street, cross-examined him in his usual monosyllabic way, puffing at his pipe and, satisfied that Rance favoured prompt Burmese independence within the hour appointed him governor. Britain's policy towards Burma changed in that hour from trying to delay independence by keeping Aung San out of government to welcoming independence by bringing him in. Mountbatten was amazed by the speed of the decision.

Attlee found that Mountbatten's advice was sound. Burma quickly ceased to be a dangerous country close to war with Britain and became a willing partner advancing to independence. Aung San came to London and Attlee considered his delegation "a very pleasant lot". Churchill denounced the policy as scuttling and humiliating abasement before an ally of the Japanese, but Attlee knew Britain had not the resources to suppress Aung San's movement and therefore made no fuss about doing a deal with him. The replacement of Dornan-Smith by Mountbatten's man, Rance, was a trial run for the replacement of Wavell by Mountbatten. (Aung San and all his ministers were shot dead by agents of a rival, U Saw, in July 1947, but Attlee and Rance stuck to their policy, transferring

you'd forgotten you felt. America and the mid-West.



# Gandhi Arrives On Indian

India's freedom and, as it happened, the interaction between British policy, the Congress, the Muslim League and personalities such as Gandhi, Nehru and Jinnah. Indeed, neither the British government nor the Congress was a monolith. Neither was free from an internal debate, occasionally bitter and prolonged. It is necessary to bring all these strands, at once complementary and contradictory, into a discussion of the subject to make it reasonably truthful. Brian Lapping does precisely that in his "End Of Empire", which is what makes it so gripping.

Continuing excerpts from Brian Lapping's "End Of Empire."

BETWEEN the two durbars of Curzon in 1903 and of George V in 1911 came the turning-point, the beginning of the end of British rule. In Britain a Liberal Government was elected in 1906 and, like previous Liberal governments, introduced reforms in India. The Morley-Minto reforms of 1909—Morley was secretary of state for India, Minto was Viceroy—opened the way to an unstoppable process. Needless to say, this was not their intention.

The content of the reforms looks undramatic. Some elected Indians were to sit on provincial legislative councils (legcos) and the number of appointed Indians on the central legco was substantially increased.

Tilak's wing of Congress had begun a terror campaign, mainly in Bengal, and both Morley and Minto realised that to repress this movement, while necessary, was not enough. So the reforms were shaped in consultation with the Congress moderates and Gokhale became a member of the enlarged legislative council, thus acquiring a splendid platform from which to demand further reforms. Morley and Minto even insisted in March 1909 on appointing the first ever Indian to the Viceroy's Council, the nearest thing India had to a Cabinet. He was a Hindu lawyer, Satyendra Prassano Sinha (later Lord Sinha and a member of

the judicial committee of the Privy Council).

One feature of the Morley-Minto reforms was to remain the subject of controversy till long after independence. In the elections to the larger provincial assemblies, constituencies of the British type were not thought suitable: the numbers to be elected were too small and the voters too excitable. So appropriate groups were invited to choose representatives: universities, chambers of commerce, municipal boards, landowners and — the contentious case — minority religious groups. Minto accepted the argument that in the few elections hitherto held in India — following Ripon's act and some others — the Muslims had done badly: not only did Hindus greatly outnumber them but a larger proportion of the Hindus were rich and therefore qualified to vote and Hindus usually got elected; so it followed that the Muslims must have reserved seats.

Because of this decision Minto was charged by Hindus with attempting to divide the communities of India so that Britain could continue to rule. The evidence suggests that he was not so Machiavellian. He simply wanted to get on with the job of manning the assemblies. Nevertheless in 1906, the year in which he conceded separate electorates, was also the year in which the Muslim League was set up. It marked the creation of a political career structure in which

contact with Gandhi; who was eventually to become almost his second father.

Within a few years Gandhi, with the young Nehru always close behind him, had succeeded in changing the Congress from a predominantly Anglophile, middle-class debating society into a political force that could bring Indians in their millions onto the streets. Gokhale and Tilak had played their part in this evolution, but Gandhi was decisive — and General Dyer helped in ways he would never understand.

Thus from 1920 on, India became intermittently ungovernable. Gandhi's response to the Amritsar massacre had been to say "co-operation in any shape or form with this satanic government is sinful". He won support for a demand that members of Congress resign government office, withdraw from government schools and colleges and boycott the elections to the provincial councils. One Cong-



BEFORE THE PARTITION: (From left) Jawaharlal Nehru,

success was to be achieved by encouraging sectarianism, something Parliament would never have allowed in England. Among those opposed to separate electorates was a young Muslim Congressman, Mohammad Ali Jinnah.

Gandhi returned to India in 1915 after more than twenty years in South Africa, still a believer in the British Empire and its willingness to teach Indians self-government. When, in the course of re-learning about India, he wrote a report to the Viceroy on the appalling conditions on the indigo plantations in Bihar, his every recommendation was accepted and implemented. He joined a committee set up by the government of Bombay to deal with the problem of professional beggary. Montagu, the secretary of state, who met Gandhi in Delhi in 1917, described him as "my friend".

After Amritsar, as he turned Gandhi launched a campaign of non-cooperation with the Government between 1920 and 1922, between 1930 and 1934 and again in 1942.

Jinnah was no Muslim fundamentalist. He was an ambitious lawyer. Muslim and Hindu fanaticism were alike distasteful to him. When a young man, he openly favoured Muslim-Hindu marriages and himself married a Parsee girl. He drank whisky. He wore a stiff white collar even in the hottest weather and when making a speech he would fix his monocle to his eye to add emphasis to a pause. He had been an active lieutenant of the Congress moderate Gokhale and in the 1920s he was described as the ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity. But as the 1920s advanced and Gandhi's campaigns brought the Congress widespread mass support, Jinnah found himself displaced. His fastidious taste was offended by the organisation's changing tone: he was better at

against the British, Gandhi showed the bitterness, the vengefulness and also the inconsistency of a rejected lover. He had given the British Empire his energy and trust — even his love — and Dyer was the reply. He began to use the techniques he had developed in South Africa to expose the weaknesses of the British administration. He had abandoned the black tailcoat and striped trousers of the lawyer and adopted instead a style like that of a poor Indian peasant, a dhoti (or long loincloth) and a shawl of simple cotton. These helped him on his return to India, when he was shocked by the poverty of his fellow countrymen, to win their support.

Further, he insisted that his clothes be made of hand-spun cotton — khaddar — which was formerly common throughout India, but had been totally displaced by cheap British, Japanese and later Indian factory cloth. He wanted to resurrect village without popular support. Just as able though it was in terms of British constitutional practice, however, the 1937 decision had damaging consequences. The Viceroy looked into the many complaints and found that none was substantial but to a great many Muslims it seemed that a Hindu raj might take complete control.

Mohammad Ali Jinnah, having reluctantly agreed to lead a Muslim communal movement, was not prepared to be slighted. He set about the uphill task of building mass support for the Muslim League. Gandhi and Nehru had insulated a man whose iron will more than equalled that of Robert Clive, who, 180 years earlier, had held out at Arcot for fifty days.

(To be continued)

An extract from "End Of Empire" by Brian Lapping published by Granada on 28th March 1985 at £14.95.





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(Continued from page 1 Col. 6)

Bangladesh! What a shame that would be! These countries did not have a Gandhi, a Nehru, a Pater a Rajendra Prasad, a Maulana Azad, a Rajagopalachari. Will all their work be reduced to ashes? It is difficult to believe it. That is why I said yesterday (in the diary) Indian democracy will arise from its grave".

He returned to the subject on July 26 after a month in detention: "There must be two plans instead of one. One, to which Indiraji is privy and is made to believe that it is her plan. In this plan, Indiraji is always at the top till death intervenes. The other plan is a Soviet plan which the CPI has been made to believe has emerged from their own brilliant heads. This plan is not known to Indiraji though she might have some private suspicions. It is also not known to the Communist stooges in the Congress, except a very few whom the Soviets trust and who by their outward actions have never shown any sympathy for the CPI or even the Soviets..."

On August 6, the outlook seemed darker: "The expected has happened. Mrs Gandhi has insured herself against a possible adverse judgment of the Supreme Court by amendment of the Representation of the Peoples Act. A drastic constitutional amendment is also expected. All this to complete the dictatorship of the self-appointed saviour of the country. All this is said to be done according to the Constitution. Hitler too used the democratic process to establish his fateful dictatorship. Will India also have to go through hell to emerge again from this darkness? It seems certain now. But the price India will have paid is crippling. May God help her".

The next day, the agony of self-blame, (translated from Hindi): "Total Revolution is our slogan; future history belongs to us". Will this now remain an irony of history? All *jee-hu-oor*s, cowards and sycophants, must be laughing at us. "They dared to reach the stars, but descended into hell", this is how they must be ridiculing us. But only those who seek to reach the stars have achieved anything in the world, may be at the cost of their lives. Instead of total revolution, we find today the dark clouds of total counter-revolution encircling us. It is a feast day for the owls and jackals whose hoots and growls we hear from all sides. But howsoever dark the night may be, the dawn is bound to follow".

At this point, the desire for death is not far: "If social revolution were just to follow the revolutions of nature, there would have been no place for human effort for social pro-

gress and change. We are we to answer is, and sang that song must offer to sacrifice themselves. And the first to kiss the altar must be the one who was their leader. Doubts have been set at rest; the decision has been taken. Last night while offering prayers to the goddess Bhagwati, I had asked for a way out of this darkness, and I got it this morning. My mind is now calm and composed".

J.P. had taken a decision to go on an indefinite fast, which was later postponed, and wrote a letter to Mrs Gandhi informing her of the decision, but it was not sent. These decisions are referred to in a brief, cryptic entry on August 11: "My earlier decision stands. The letter was not sent. I destroyed it. I will wait for the proper time after seeing how the situation develops".

For three days, J.P. was obviously trying hard to concentrate on developments outside his isolated hospital room, not on his own fears. He reiterated his views on electoral reform and Gandhian democracy to rebut the Prime Minister's charge that he believed in dictatorship and commented on constitutional arguments. But on August 14, he returns to his own deteriorating condition: "...except for the Director (of the Institute), as soon as any other doctor or one of the nurses enters my room, there follows closely the jailor or police—[may be also the IB (Intelligence Branch) or CBI (Central Bureau of Investigation)]. They are all parked here on the entire floor occupying several rooms—representative (a head sepoy perhaps) who keeps standing at my door all the 24 hours (they take turns) .... Thus, while I am in hospital and am being well looked after (this was written before he became suspicious about his treatment) and while a number of persons come and go, I am really alone.

On August 15, Independence Day, he asked: "...Is anything left of that democracy (envisaged in the Constitution) today? All this appears to be so unreal and dreamlike that the President and the Prime Minister have to reassure the people again and again that the emergency is a temporary affair".

Here J.P. reiterated his faith that India's people and especially her youth would not let action would allow democracy to be liquidated. To justify this, he stressed India's size and diverse resistance, and recalled that "history is a witness to the fact that India has never fully succeeded in its effort to govern the world. India from a single empire became Janata never fully successful. But when there was no democracy based on franchise, or of rights of the people, the Government in

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Why had it not been poss- ible for Congress Governments to cooperate with such move- ments? J.P. found the answer in corruption, "Mrs Gandhi's own conduct in collect- ing crores from rich business men for party and election manage- ment", he noted, "is a piece of political corruption that has completely destroyed the moral sensibilities of most power- seeking Congressmen". Money had been collected earlier, too, "but the scale of operations was comparatively small and

## IND HOPE

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Would Opposition parties be- have any differently? Return- ing to the issue a week after he mentioned it in relation to Chandra Shekhar's question, his analysis shows greater clar- ity. "Having once joined the movement", he wrote, "no doubt to exploit it for party and election purposes (which is in the very nature of polit- ical parties), they find them- selves not only committed to the final goal of total revol- ution but also being radicaliz- ed in the process of the struggle.... The only excep- tions are places where only one party holds sway, and the non-party among students, citizens and the local Sarvodaya workers are weak; the party in question has in that case identified its party interests with the interests of the strug- gle. It was precisely with a view to strengthening the non- party forces that I had been busy organizing a new volun- teer force of non-party youths and students called Chhatra- Yuvak Sangharsha Vahini".

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such personal quality in Indiraji or in her party as to believe that her autocratic rule over this vast land will continue for long."

Before concluding for the day J.P. reiterated an objective for which he had been working without much success, and in doing so gave another instance of his ability to anticipate the fusion of emotional and political factors that brings about revolutionary change. If the Opposition parties had been united, he noted, "the Congress rule would have ended long ago. I hope the Opposition, having passed through the fire of dictatorship, will unite now. In fact, one of the reasons that contributed to the proclamation of emergency was that after the victory of the Janata front in Gujarat, Mrs Gandhi felt that there was a possibility of Opposition unity at the national level, in which case she might not win the next election to the Lok Sabha. Moreover, the impact of the Bihar movement was spreading to other States. In

remained basically the same as during British rule: a system of "class education, designed as an escalator to reach the top. In most of the country, customs, manners, beliefs and superstitions had not changed, while there had been a steady decline in political, public and business morality. Poverty was growing, with more than 40 per cent of the people below the poverty line.

The underlying question he then poses is: "Can the picture be fundamentally altered through the ordinary democratic process? Even if the Opposition wins, will the picture change?"

And he answers: "I fear, no. Laws will be passed and applied, money will be spent—even if all this is done, possibly without corruption creeping in, will the structure, the system, the 'order' of our society change?" He did not think so. For instance, laws had not prevented the system of dowry ruining many families and the lives of many girls. So he concluded: "There is no

Bihar, but much more which I had 'capsuled' (if I may coin this word) in the term 'revolution'. The movement would go on, which in itself would be a powerful guarantee of the Opposition Government always being on its toes, and it would go faster and smoother because the new Government would give its full cooperation.... The upshot of what I have been saying is that the people's movement of the type I am visualizing here can proceed either in cooperation or in confrontation with the Government concerned."

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## DESPAIR AND HOPE

such a situation, she might herself have decided that her interest lay in destroying democracy itself. However, as would be clear from what I have said above, she will never succeed in this satanic attempt."

Apart from these insights, the most valuable thoughts recorded in the diary concerned the Bihar Movement, its objectives and the key importance of struggle, of organized pressure from outside the formal democratic structure to achieve the breakthrough in all seven aspects of life—social, economic, political, cultural, ideological or intellectual, educational and spiritual—that he termed Total Revolution.

J.P. clarified his thinking on the subject, and of those who read the diary—to an extent that may not have been possible if he had not been forced to focus on it to himself from despair. For, at 23, by noting that the conditions in which nine-tenths of the population of the country—small and marginal landowners and the landless, the backward classes and the Harijans—existed continued to be miserable. Meanwhile, state capitalism, with no element of true socialism in it, had multiplied inefficiency, waste and corruption. The educational system

remedy but a vigorous social movement, a peaceful struggle against the evil. Likewise, the implementation of land reforms, homestead tenancy legislation, removal of corruption in the administration, etc. All this requires a mass awakening and a mass struggle. The youth, including the students, must naturally be in the vanguard."

To bring about a systemic change in society, a revolution in its every sphere and aspect became even harder when it had to be brought about peacefully, without impairing the democratic structure of society. "Put in this way, the most legalistic and constitutionalist democrat would agree that all this could never be accomplished if the functioning of democracy were restricted to elections, legislation, planning and administrative execution. There must also be people's direct action. This action would almost certainly comprise, among other things, civil disobedience, peaceful resistance, non-cooperation—in short, satyagraha in its widest sense."

He recalled Chandra Shekhar (who later became Janata Party President) asking him if the situation would change if the Congress were replaced by an Opposition Government. His answer was "that the movement's only aim was not only to change the Government in

most of the money was accounted for.... Nor were business bargains struck in the process so shamelessly corrupt as those of which one has heard in Mrs Gandhi's time."

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Sketch of J. P. by R. K. Laxman.





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erty, unemployment, mis-education, etc. J.P. noted that "still there is need for a spark to kindle the fires of struggle, to set alight the dry tinder-box of Indian society". The emergency had created a new situation, but—unsentimentally for once—he wrote: "The longer the fighters are kept in prison, the better it would be for the resumption of the struggle".

Even with the rigours of the emergency reaching their peak, J.P. felt that Mrs Gandhi was committed to hold elections; though this would be when she was satisfied that the Opposition was demoralized and the people dazzled by her 20-point programme. "Whenever that moment came", he again predicted correctly, "the election date's will be announced and the detenus released".

Returning to the subject next day, he felt that the Gujarat and Bihar movements had shown that they could grow out of a comparatively minor agitation. From this viewpoint, the Gujarat movement "was a path-finder in India's march towards democracy.... The Gujarat movement for the first time in India the primacy of the people, going over the heads of organized parties and asserting their will".

A few days later, he turned his attention to the "prevailing system" in India and its philosophy: He found it dominated by the small economically better-off section, "a tiny part of them quite affluent in the Western style-of-living sense... If there is a system it is made of these elements and the system's philosophy is that of the educated and economic elite. The élite from the rural areas are being constantly sucked into the urban areas.

"What is the philosophy of the system? To have more of what they have, to climb higher up and, on the radical fringes (socialist, Communist, etc.) to see that more persons have what they have—i.e. spread the benefit. All politics, all education, all privileges are confined to this tiny layer of society at the top—not necessarily all capitalists, but all privileged.... In India, this tiny layer of the élite, barring rare individuals wants more modern technology, more industrialization, more mechanization and chemicalization of agriculture. That is the ethos of modernism in India"

Although no longer a disciple of Acharya Vinoba Bhave, J. P. remained sensitive to anything he said or did that reflected on his activities. He mulled over some of the differences between them in the diary. He recalled, for instance, that Vinoba had advised him against waging a struggle against the Government in the course of his struggle against economic and social injustice. The reason given by

the Acharya was surprisingly chauvinistic: that with the United States arming Pakistan and China also helping her—"more with words than military hardware", noted J.P.—it was not advisable to weaken the Government.

"But what do we have now?" asked J.P. "Not a war with Pakistan but a deliberate, preplanned and ghastly murder of Indian democracy. Vinobaji had not given a hint of this. I wonder if he considers that a totalitarian dictatorship is a healthy course of discipline, a sort of fire of purification which the country and particularly hotheads like me, Morarji Desai, Siddharaj (Dhadda, president of the Sarva Seva Sangh, who was also in detention), and a host of others must pass so that India becomes strong enough to face her enemies and also make

from a spiritual point of view. I look at them from the social point of view. So differences are natural in our methods of working. Such differences lead to differences of opinion between friends, and they have occurred. But today our country is in a dangerous situation and to get over it there is need for the spiritual leadership of Vinoba Bhave".

The final entries in J.P.'s diary reveal how sudden, painful and suspicious was the onset of the illness that led to the malfunctioning of his kidneys and brought him near death's door.

October 11 was J.P.'s 73rd birthday. "May God grant me wisdom and the will to devote whatever time is left for me to the service of the country and the people. That is the only way I have known to serve God", he wrote and was pleased and surprised when the Superintendent of the Jail, Sardar Mohinder Singh, gave a large bouquet of flowers.

On October 20, the report of a relatively outspoken speech by Sheikh Abdullah made him hope "we shall hear more such voices. For the present, however, there is the silence of the grave in the entire country".

Then the pain was back, worse than ever. On October 29, he managed to write: "Have gone through hell these last days—days (of) continuous pain in the lower abdominal region. Felt miserable. All kinds of investigations were done but nothing has been found. Yet the pain, though less than before, continues. Constipation—"trifala" does not work any more. Vomiting last night and this morning too. Have no appetite. There is total aversion to food".

J.P. was released from detention on November 12 and, four days later, flown to the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences in New Delhi, where he had been taken after his arrest four and a half months earlier. To the few friends who were able to see him, it was evident that he had been freed because he was on the brink of death. At his brother Raja's insistence, he was flown to Bombay on November 22 and admitted to Jaslok Hospital. It was then that the doctors diagnosed that only regular dialysis could keep him alive. The suspicion that he had been poisoned, though not necessarily with the connivance of the doctors, was hard to eradicate thereafter.

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Sketch of J. P. by R. K. Laxman.

## JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

A Political Biography  
Ajit Bhattacharjee



progress towards moral, material and spiritual fulfilment".

On September 11, J.P. wrote: "Today is Vinoba's birthday. He completes eighty years of his life today. May he live for a hundred years!" But he was generous about the Congress leaders who used the occasion to lionize Vinoba and emphasize the differences between him and J.P. "It is all so disgustingly cunning", he noted. "Mrs Gandhi's plane dash to Vinoba, her overnight stay at the ashram and now these fulsome celebrations in Delhi...."

On October 2, Mahatma Gandhi's birth anniversary, he stressed the difference between Gandhi's activist philosophy and Vinoba's "experiment of 'action' in the form of 'in-action'". J.P. was less sarcastic about Vinoba in his letter to the people of Bihar. He minimized the differences between them. "Actually there is no big difference of opinion or conception on the basic questions facing our people", he wrote. "The differences are only about the approach, the mode of thinking. You know Vinoba is a saint. He is a spiritual man. He approaches every question



**A** T three in the morning of June 26, 1975, Radhakrishna, secretary of the Gandhi Peace Foundation, woke J.P. to inform him that the police had come to arrest him. They had arrived an hour earlier, but he had persuaded them to let J.P. sleep a little longer because he was tired after the previous day's exertions. It did not take long to pack J.P.'s few personal belongings.

But, informed about the arrest by telephone, three of his closest sympathizers in the ruling party—Chandra Shekhar, Mohan Dharma and Krishan Kant, all members of Parliament—were able to see him before he was driven away. Chandra Shekhar accompanied him to the police station, to be informed that he too was under arrest.

Before being taken into cus-

3 a.m., he told his people, "From there I was taken by car to Sohna in Haryana and detained in a rest house (part of a tourist complex there). On reaching Sohna, I realized that Shri Morarji Desai had also been arrested and brought there."

"I was at the rest house for only three days. During these three days the doctors who examined me discovered that I had a heart ailment. That was the first time I was found to be suffering from a heart disease. I had never been a heart patient before (though he had been found to have a murmur of the heart while convalescing at Vellore). My health had also been generally satisfactory before I was imprisoned. But within three days of my arrest and detention, something was found physically wrong with my heart. So the doctors sent me to the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences in New Delhi for fur-

of democracy." (5)  
"Where have my calculations gone wrong? (I almost said 'Our' calculations, but that would be wrong. I must bear the full, the whole responsibility). In assuming that a Prime Minister in a democracy would use all the normal and abnormal laws to defeat a peaceful democratic movement, but could not destroy democracy itself and substitute for it a totalitarian system, I could not believe that even if the Prime Minister wanted to do it, her senior colleagues and her party—with such high democratic traditions would permit it. But the unbelievable has happened."

The entry for July 21 ends in what for J.P. was an unusual note of bitterness, occasioned presumably by the silence of and even support given to Mrs Gandhi by intellectuals and academics who previously had been most vociferous in attacking him.

"I wonder", he wrote, "what

his miscalculating the Prime Minister's authoritarian response to the Bihar movement and the objectives for which it had been launched; the first, an attempt to determine his own responsibility for what had happened; the second, to justify what he had done. The conflict deepened and led to moods of depression as the gloom of the emergency deepened and the prospects of release from authoritarian rule appeared to become more and more remote. His environment only made things worse.

He was confined for much of the time to a small hospital room in Chandigarh and could walk only in the closed corridor leading to it, with police guards at either end. The circumstances are described in his letter to the people of Bihar: "My life under detention at Chandigarh is a long story. I would like to say only this much now that during the 130 and odd days of detention, I remained completely isolated. The total isolation was very painful to me. Of course, doctors, nurses and police officers used to see me but they would only inquire after my health. There was no one with whom I could converse freely. The loneliness was a kind of mental torture."

On July 22, after four weeks of detention, J.P. wrote in the diary: "I had always believed that Mrs Gandhi had no inclination and conviction as a dictator. My belief has tragically turned out to be true... Where then did I go wrong? Events have shown that my mistake was in assuming that, whatever Mrs Gandhi's personal inclination, it would not be possible for her to become a dictator. First, I thought that the people would not allow it and she would have no courage to go ahead. Second, I thought that the Congress Party would not let that happen. I still think that popular resistance will grow and gather strength. It will take time."

His contempt for the CPI, rooted in the many occasions that he felt that Communist leaders had exploited his credulity and betrayed the country, and the possible role of the Soviet Union gave an extra dimension to his attitude to Mrs Gandhi. This is noted quite frankly in the same entry in his diary: "Of course, quite a number of Congressmen are disguised Communists. They will go with Mrs Gandhi to the ultimate end. They have always been enemies of democracy. Behind them is the right (Moscow-oriented) CPI and behind it is Soviet Russia. Russia has backed Mrs Gandhi to the hilt. Because the further Mrs Gandhi advances on her present course, the more powerful an influence will Russia have over this country. A time may come when, having squeezed the juice out of Mrs Gandhi, the Russians through the CPI and their Trojan horses within the Congress will dump her on the garbage heap of history and install in her place their own man". (Same aspects of Mrs Gandhi's subsequent behaviour and Sanjay's outspoken criticism of Communists suggest that they may have been coming to the same conclusion.)

"That India, too should become another Pakistan or

(Continued on page III 11)

Is there anything left of the democracy as envisaged in the Constitution? asked J.P. in his Prison Diary. In these excerpts from his revised and updated Political Biography of Jayaprakash Narayan, AJIT BHATTACHARJEA provides insights into J.P.'s thinking during the Emergency days. J.P. will be 75 on October 11.

today, J.P. was heard to quote a Sanskrit saying, *Vinasha kate viparita buddhi*, similar in meaning to the English phrase, "Those whom the gods wish to destroy, they first make mad". But he was considerably shaken to find how much he had miscalculated Mrs Gandhi's reactions and decisions when he learned of the full range of dictatorial measures she had had taken under the guise of an internal emergency.

The impact is described vividly in a diary he kept in detention. The diary the letters to the Prime Minister kept with it and his subsequent letter to the people of Bihar together provide an insight into his thinking and re-thinking, his analysis of Mrs Gandhi's temperament, the objectives and limitations of the movement he was leading and other major issues.

The letter to the people of his home State recounts the circumstances of his arrest baldly and unemotionally, but because it was written more than a year later when he had realized the crippling nature of the sickness he had contracted in detention, his suspicions about the Government's motives become evident much earlier than in the diary. The letter is in Hindi. "At the Gandhi Peace Foundation, where I was staying, I was arrested on June 26 at about

ther examination...I was kept at the Medical Institute for two days and then flown to Chandigarh in an Indian Air Force plane. My new place of detention was the Post-Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research at Chandigarh from where I was ultimately released on November 12, 1975."

Although begun nearly four weeks after his arrest, the first entry in J.P.'s prison diary reveals a greater degree of despair and self-blame for his failure to foresee how far Mrs Gandhi could go towards authoritarian rule to remain in office than caused by any previous miscalculation. But despair does not imply surrender, self-abasement or even rejection of the letter he wrote to the Prime Minister the same day. In fact, the contrast between the two documents brings out an aspect of J.P.'s personality that was never so noticeable, or possibly had not developed to the same extent, before—a difference between personal feelings and public appearance. Possibly, this had developed owing to the essentially lonely life he had led after Prabhavati's death.

The prison diary begins on July 21, 1975, with: "My world lies in shambles all around me. I am afraid I shall not see it put together again in my life-time. Maybe

all those ladies and gentlemen are saying now who used to tell me that I was the only 'hope' for the country. Are they invoking curses on my head for bringing about this terrible doom? I should not be surprised. They may even be saying that hemmed in from all sides as Mrs Gandhi was, she could not but act in the manner she has."

In spite of these doubts, however, he goes on to con-

clude: "But I hope there are some people at least, particularly among the young, who may still be loyal to me and to the cause I represented. They are the hope of the future. India will arise from the grave, no matter how long it may take."

As his loneliness and sense of self-doubt grew under confinement, J.P. returned again and again to the reasons for

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## III

Sir.—The cruel assassination of our Prime Minister, Mrs Indira Gandhi, has shaken and grieved all citizens. The nation should be grateful for the smooth transition of power. Democracy has taken deeper roots in India. Those who harp on the theme of dynastic rule should know that Mr Rajiv Gandhi was not appointed mother, who was not around to dictate to her party to do so. The Congress parliamentary party unanimously welcomed his appointment to the highest seat of power in India. He is filling a difficult void and is committed to upholding time-tested policies.

A.K. PEETHAMBARAN  
New Delhi.

## IV

Sir.—With the death of Mrs Indira Gandhi not only the nation but the world has suffered an irreparable loss. Death snatched her just a few days before her 69th birthday. As such November 19 should be declared a national holiday and her photograph should be hung alongside those of Mahatma Gandhi and her illustrious father in public buildings.

PRAKASH CHAND SETH  
Delhi.

## V

Sir.—After the most heinous murder of Mrs Indira Gandhi what I found here at Patna, was that almost all the persons who were involved in looting and arson were anti-social elements who were perhaps waiting for such an opportunity.

Furthermore, the rumour-monger who fuelled the flames of communalism, played an arch villain role in this drama.

The largest democratic country of the world has survived the graves crisis in the past and this too should prove to be only a passing phase. Not the government alone, but every citizen of this country, regardless of caste, creed and community, has a responsibility to discharge his duty by promoting peace and harmony between the two estranged communities.

## Communal Riots

Sir.—Your editorial "Tackling Communal Riots" (October 29) is full of sensible observations. A blanket ban on religious processions may prove counter-productive. If Hindus are denied the right to take out Ganesh or Durga processions and Muslim Id-e-Milad and Moharrum processions, it would intensify feelings of bitterness between the two communities. Unscrupulous politicians are ever present to fish in such troubled waters.

What is needed is not a piecemeal approach to the communal problem but comprehensive legislation on communal riots with stringent provisions for punishment to those who instigate them or participate in them and for such members of the police force as adopt partisan attitudes. The emphasis should be on preventive action and impartial dealing with leaders of communal and linguistic organisations, who continuously spout poison and hatred, incite ignorant people to violence and, after playing havoc with life and property of the people, get away with it.

That is exactly what happened in the recent communal riots in Bhiwandi, Thane and Bombay. The criminals who incited people to indulge in an orgy of death and destruction not only escaped punishment for their crimes but are still strutting about in society as if they are above all the laws of the land. What is needed is effective legislation for punishing white-collar communal criminals. Another effective way of reducing communal terrors is to educate people through television, films and radio about politicians who are creating walls of hatred among the different communities living in India.

HATIM E. JANI  
Bombay

## LETTERS

### Mrs Gandhi Indira Gandhi

Sir.—The perils of religious and communalism are ominously after taking thousands of precious lives that of the Mahatma elevated the Indian freedom movement into a movement of non-violence and now of the Prime Minister and daughter of India, Gandhi.

At a time when we mourn the loss, we sink our heads in even this national catastrophe, awakened us to the stark continuing with separate based on religion or which exacerbate the violence and serve only the enemies of India.

Let us realise that the of the nation is at stake resolve to give itself a character must now assume manners to ensure that all religious communal meaningful only to the emerge into the secular world, so that a progressive ensures equal opportunity Indian citizen free from the crime in the true blood of Mrs Gandhi and of the Indian Constitution thousands savagely killed and injured in the recent mob frenzy which has dragged India's name in the mud. It is the Chauhan and the Dhillions who strengthened the hand of the extremists amongst the Sikhs at the cost of the moderate Sikh leadership to the country's cost.

It is they who should hold themselves responsible for the trauma many years to come. Not Sikhs in India are going through today, token not of remembrance for the misery and tragedy of the knowledge would it refugees. Yet they continue to aggrivate the situation further. Let us the Sikhs of this country, tell them once and for all that we have had enough of their meddling, tell them to keep out of our affairs, tell them that they have no right to interfere in the affairs of a country whose citizenship they have renounced. What they have done is done. Let them keep their peace from now on.

Unfortunately only Amarindar Singh, ex-ruler of Patiala, has told them so in no uncertain terms on November 8. It is high time that all of us told them "keep out of our affairs".

HARJI MALIK  
New Delhi.

KRISHNA DE  
V.D.  
New Delhi.

Sir.—Mrs Indira Gandhi to India and global peace allow her memory to be many years to come. Not token not of remembrance for the misery and tragedy of the knowledge would it refugees. Yet they continue to aggrivate the situation further. Let us the Sikhs of this country, tell them once and for all that we have had enough of their meddling, tell them to keep out of our affairs, tell them that they have no right to interfere in the affairs of a country whose citizenship they have renounced. What they have done is done. Let them keep their peace from now on.

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HARJI MALIK  
New Delhi.

PO  
II

Sir.—I wish to share with that of my fellow Indians. The tragic assassination of Mrs Indira Gandhi has snatched the brightest jewel of India. She set the course of progress and was never more needed when the country is in a very difficult phase. Come but it is doubt national leader with qualities will be present some time.

RAME  
Chandigarh

Sir.—The assassination of Mrs Indira Gandhi at her residence by her own security guards was a heinous and cruel act. She was keenly interested in reading and politics from her childhood. In 1942 she was married and within few months of her marriage, she was imprisoned for participating in the national movement. Most of the time she worked with her father, Jawaharlal Nehru. In 1959 she was made Congress president, the first lady president. In 1964, on the death of her father, she joined the cabinet of late Mr Lal Bahadur Shastri as minister for Information and Broadcasting. In 1966, she became PM on his death.

She was endowed with great courage, self-confidence, a strong will and did whatever she wanted to do. In 1969 she nationalised banks in spite of opposition from her own senior colleagues; in 1970 she declared mid-term elections and won with a great majority; in 1971 she liberated Bangladesh from Pakistan. In 1971 she won the war against Pakistan; in 1975 she imposed emergency to improve the law and order position; in 1977 she suffered defeat in the general elections, but did not lose courage and patience and came back to power again in 1980 with a thumping majority; in 1982 she held the 'Asiad Games' in India in spite of opposition and in 1983 the Non-Aligned Movement conference was held here of which she was made chairperson, which increased the prestige of India.

She worked tirelessly to promote unity and economic development in India.





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by Rafiq Zakaria

**M**OUNTBATTEN was the greatest showman in the political arena that the British empire ever produced. He did everything with an eye to the public. He changed

the author, Philip Ziegler, took five years to write it and he has produced an outstanding work which is at once sympathetic and reasonably objective. We are primarily concerned with his role as the last British viceroy in India who presided over the transfer of power and partition of the country.

It was Churchill's defeat at the polls in 1945 in Britain which changed the course of events in India; his successor, Mr. Attlee, meant business and wanted someone who could manage the transfer of power. He selected Mountbatten to replace Wavell as viceroy because, as Attlee later disclosed, Mountbatten was an "extremely lively, exciting personality. He had an extraordinary faculty for getting on with all kinds of people... He was also blessed with a very unusual wife." When the offer was made by Attlee, Mountbatten hesitated; but this was, as suggested in some quarters, "as much feigned as that of the speaker who has to be dragged protesting to the chair of the House of Commons."

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### Losses On Both Sides

Mountbatten's role on the eve of the partition of the sub-continent has been discussed at length. Many Indians, including Nehru, believed that his was a helpful role; but there are many discerning critics, both Indian and British, who feel that he was a man in a hurry, who decided on a massive operation, without sufficient thought and planning, with the result that lakhs of people died on either side of the border and millions were rendered refugees.

# He presided over the partition of India

Much of this could have been avoided; even the problem of Kashmir, which is Mountbatten's legacy to India, could have been resolved had he not persuaded Nehru to refer it to the United Nations. The longer it persisted the more complicated it became for both the states. Only after the Simla Agreement between

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At a speech in India House when he was on a visit to London in November, the governor-general sought to minimise the scale of the disaster. "Only a hundred thousand people had died, he said, only a small part of the country had been affected." "I was horrified at Dickie's speech," Ismay told his wife. ".... It seems to me immaterial whether one hundred thousand or a million have actually died; or whether only three per cent of the country is in turmoil. The essential facts are that there is human misery on a colossal scale all around one and millions are bereaved, destitute, homeless, hungry, thirsty — and worst of all desperately anxious and almost hopeless about their future."

Nehru grew extremely fond of Lady Mountbatten but, apart from gossip and innuendoes there is not a shred of evidence to prove that there was any intimate relationship between the two. Mr. Ziegler has gone through their entire correspondence; some of the most revealing letters have been quoted by him. These show the high level of emotional attachment between them; in one of them, Nehru, in fact, mourns. "What has happened, is happening, to the values we cherished." It is from some of the observations of Mountbatten, that an innuendo is sought to be drawn. In a letter to his daughter, Patricia, he wrote, "Please keep this to yourself but she and Jawaharlal are so sweet together. They dote on each other in the nicest way and Pammmy and I



Mrs. Gandhi and Mr. Bhutto has it been defused to a large extent.

Mr. Ziegler refers to, what he calls, "revisionist Indian historians," who thought Mountbatten to be "a crafty diplomat," who "manipulated" innocent Indian politicians; but he felt such reasoning "exaggerates the viceroy's cunning." Mountbatten justified the hastening of the partition on the ground that "any form of a united India would start a civil war"; but the partition led to a different kind of civil war which is what the Indo-Pakistan conflict is.

Mountbatten's assessment of Indian leaders was not all that happy. He was too much of an aristocrat to show what he felt about them; but, in his private letters and diaries he has fully revealed himself. In one of his early encounters with Sardar Patel, who according to Mr. Ziegler, was "tough, unscrupulous", Mountbatten refused to be cowed down by him.

There was a heated exchange between them, whereupon Mountbatten said that either Patel must leave the government or he would resign as viceroy. Mountbatten recorded, "Patel suddenly realised that I meant business and completely collapsed." Does this description fit what we know of Patel's character? It is difficult to believe that such a man would have collapsed.

There is another bloomer in Mr. Ziegler's account. He says that Nehru had decided to drop Sardar Patel from his first cabi-

### Mountbatten : The Official Biography : By Philip Ziegler (Collins, £ 15)

Enough has been written to debunk Mountbatten's boast that when riots broke out, both Nehru and Patel asked him to take over the administration; in this book Mr. Ziegler is more circumspect than the authors of *Freedom at Midnight*, who first disclosed this version of Mountbatten. The source is Mr. V. P. Menon, but Mr. M. O. Mathai, who was one of Nehru's closest aides, wrote in his book that Mr. Menon had acted on his own in approaching Mountbatten to come back from Simla to Delhi and take over the administration.

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Mr. Ziegler writes, "Both men were furious when they heard that the governor-general was on the way, but agreed that the only thing left to do was not to embarrass Mountbatten and to do something gracious to associate him with the handling of the developing situation in Delhi which Menon had exaggerated enormously." Hence Mountbatten was appointed chairman of the emergency committee.

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Mountbatten, it seemed, lost a lot of his tenderness for Nehru's daughter after she became India's Prime Minister; Mrs. Indira Gandhi's socialist policies were not to his liking. He was especially horrified by her decision to abolish the privy purses. He wrote, rather indignantly, "What would her father think of her breaking the promise which he and Vallabhbhai Patel gave to the princes?" He protested to Mrs. Gandhi, pleaded, in particular, the case of his good friend, the Rajmata Gayatridevi of Jaipur, but to no avail.

"I must say that everytime I visit India, it tears at my heart-strings," he said on one of his subsequent visits. India had changed and was changing rapidly but not to Mountbatten's liking.

Mr. Ziegler's book is well researched and well written; it contains a lot of useful material derived from official and private records.



Mountbatten's role on the eve of partition has been discussed at length. Many Indians, including Nehru, believed that his was a helpful role, but there are many critics who feel that he decided on a massive operation without sufficient thought and planning.

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**M**OUNTBATTEN was the greatest showman in the political arena that the British empire ever produced. He did everything with an eye on the public. He changed his attire, used his words, frowned or smiled as the occasion demanded. Indeed, he had mastered the art, with the result that he continues to be lionised even after death as he was during his life-time, which was as colourful as it was chequered. Many books have been published about him; but the book under review is his official biography and it supercedes them.

The author, Philip Ziegler, took five years to write it and he has produced an outstanding work which is at once sympathetic and reasonably objective. We are primarily concerned with his role as the last British viceroy in India who presided over the transfer of power and partition of the country.

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Mr. Ziegler has searched and derived records which are well re-written: it is full material and private



# The viceroy who ended

Most great men have a touch of vanity in them. Mountbatten had more than just a touch. He regarded himself as a man of destiny. If ever a doubt regarding his ability crossed his mind, it was quickly brushed aside. After the partition of India, until his tragic death in 1979, he was fully convinced that he had no choice but to do what he could. He was a hero of India's independence and partition from June 1948 to August 1947 at the risk of neglecting his other duties. Heroes are made of that kind of stuff. Mountbatten was cast in a heroic mould.

The story of the last viceroy would be incomplete without a reference to his talented and charming personality. He made a great deal to his success in India. His friendship with Nehru is well known. But that was not the only reason for his popularity — they became a legend in our country as no other viceroy and vicereine. Concluding excerpts from *The Viceroys of India* by Mark Bence-Jones.

AS Viceroy, Mountbatten made it a condition for accepting the post that he should be given plenary powers. "How could I possibly negotiate with the Cabinet breathing down my neck?" he demanded of Attlee and Cripps, when they told him that what he asked for was quite without precedent. "But you are asking to be above the secretary of state!" Cripps exclaimed, to which Mountbatten replied laconically: "Exactly". Mountbatten doubted if he would get his way over this, but in the end he did. Soon after his arrival in India, Nehru asked him "Have you by some miracle, got plenipotentiary powers?" Suppose I have" said Mountbatten, "what difference would it make?" "Why then" replied Nehru, "you will succeed where all others have failed."

Another of Mountbatten's conditions for accepting the viceroyalty was that there should be a deadline for the handing over of power. This was just what Wavell had been urging without success; and indeed, the date for which Mountbatten and the Cabinet now settled, June 1948, was the date Wavell had advocated in the previous December. Mountbatten always maintained that he had been in complete agreement with Wavell's policy, at any rate up to June 1946, which was the last time the two of them met in India before Mountbatten arrived as viceroy.

THERE are number of similarities between Mountbatten

and Curzon, the viceroy who ended the Raj and the viceroy who, more than any of the others, sought to perpetuate it. They both could at times be rash; in Mountbatten's case "this was a reflection alike of his courage and of his incurable optimism". They both had a streak of vanity and they both could be ruthless. Both brought a superhuman energy to their task; Mountbatten was more fortunate in this respect than Curzon, in enjoying excellent health and in knowing that he would only have to keep up the tremendous pressure of work for just over a year at the longest. Both looked absurdly young; though, whereas Curzon was thirty-nine when he became viceroy, Mountbatten was forty-six. They were also alike in being both married to rich and glamorous wives.

Mountbatten was sensible enough not to treat Gandhi as a negotiator, but simply as "a friendly if baffling personality to be cultivated, listened to and kept sweet."

WHEN they met for the first time in Malaya, Mountbatten and Nehru had taken an instant liking to one another; now,



an affectionate friendship grew up between them in which Edwina Mountbatten also had a part. Unlike Wavell, both the Mountbattens were able to get through to Nehru. He was usually shy and a loner. He was lonely, though constantly surrounded by people.

There were and so was Liaquat Ali Khan. Yet another unusual feature of the ceremony was that Mountbatten followed the example of Lytton and made a speech, in which he began by referring to the Government's resolve to transfer power by June 1948, adding that since many administrative questions had to be settled before power could be transferred, this in effect meant that

take. Far from being won over by the confident and outgoing Mountbatten charm, the Muslim leader was, if anything, repelled by it: "I drove the old gentleman quite mad". Mountbatten wrote after one of his meetings with him, not without a certain schoolboyish pride. It was simply that the two of them were temperamentally incompatible; but it gave Mountbatten a sense

of it surprising therefore that the people of India should love you? Next day, as the Mountbattens drove out of the forecourt of Government House in the State carriage on their way to the airport, the colonnades of Levensham Palace were thronged with people eager to catch a final glimpse of them. All in all, it was a worthy send-off for the last viceroy and vicereine.



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"LITTLE MEN SERVING GREAT CAUSES": Nehru with Mountbatten.

# When India was dismembered

It was the British cabinet which avoided the balkanisation of India.

by Govind Talwalkar

THIS book is the penultimate volume in the excellently edited 'Transfer of Power' series. It deals with the period when the "years of debate and discussion gave way to days of decision". Lord Mountbatten returned from London on May 30, 1947, bringing with him the plan for the transfer of power as well as partition. His earlier plan which could have balkanised India was torpedoed by Pandit Nehru; so he had to fall back on V. P. Menon's plan which envisaged partition as well as dominion status.

As soon as Mountbatten came to Delhi, he called a meeting of the Congress and Muslim League leaders on June 2. Sardar Baldev Singh represented the Sikhs. There was nothing shocking in the plan, as the fundamental issues had already been settled with the Indian leaders. Pakistan was conceded. The Bengal and Punjab legislative assemblies were to vote on joining the Constituent Assembly of India or Pakistan. It was decided later that a referendum would be held in NWFP to decide its future as it was the

Bengal and the Punjab voted for partition. Mahatma Gandhi tried to avoid a referendum in NWFP but failed and the verdict went in favour of Pakistan. Gandhi's efforts in this direction as well as his critical speeches during prayer meetings were not to the liking of Lord Mountbatten who said in his personal report that Gandhi might be a saint but he seemed also to be a "disciple of Trotsky." The documents reveal Gandhi to be a pathetic figure, with Sardar Patel telling V. P. Menon not to take much note of Gandhi's utterances in favour of a united India.

As the situation was unprecedented, new devices had to be invented. The Partition Council was formed. Questions arose about partitioning the army and the prospects appeared gloomy to Auchinleck, the commander-in-chief. But the leaders proved to be helpful and Sir Chaudhary Lalit Trivedi earned plaudits from all quarters for his dexterity and efficiency. A Boundary Commission under Sir Cyril Radcliffe was to demarcate the boundaries. The Punjab was under the control of the Government and for Bengal, a shadow cabinet of the opposition Congress Party was formed.

## Question Of Control

It was suggested that the Government should remain in control for a period. Patel

new department for states was created. Not only Mountbatten, but even the rulers were glad that it was Sardar Patel and not Nehru who was in charge of it. But the bone of contention was the status of the states vis-à-vis the two dominions and also Britain. Nehru had the benefit of the expert legal advice of Sir Alladi Krishnaswamy Aiyer who clearly stated that with the end of British power paramountcy also lapsed and the states would have no independent existence. Jinnah, in order to spite the Congress, buttressed the claims of the states that they would be free agents.

Hyderabad, Bhopal, Travancore and Kashmir strove very hard to remain independent of the two dominions. The Maharaja of Kashmir was ambivalent, wily and did not want to come to a decision. Bhopal was disgruntled but it was Travancore and Hyderabad who tried to raise the banner of revolt. Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyer would go down in history as Don Quixote at the time of independence. He had talks with Jinnah and was planning to establish relations with Pakistan. He proved to be clever by half.

The Nizam and Nawab of Bhopal in their communications, always harped on their loyalty and friendship with the British and on that score

enough to reject this potentially dangerous advice. It thought that it would go beyond the government's policy statement. Jinnah even influenced British newspapers and the *Times* gave no credit for settling the problem of the relations of the states with the paramount power. It was the British cabinet which avoided the balkanisation and not the viceroy.

Another problem was that of the Sikhs. They were a divided lot. Giani Kartar Singh wanted to have special status for Khalistan in Pakistan. But the other Sikh leaders did not support him. As the larger Sikh state with an independent status was ruled out, the Sikh leaders demanded weightage and special status in India. Nehru, in a letter to the Viceroy, opposed the idea altogether. He wrote "All our troubles or nearly all, have been due to separate electorates and the system of weightage, originally introduced for the Muslims. It became clear that this did little good to the minority concerned and only created separatist tendencies. The addition of a separate makes no essential difference. But it means the acceptance of a fundamentally wrong principle. This has to be underscored in the present context of the agitation by the Sikhs."

Jinnah put Mountbatten in an embarrassing position by rejecting the idea of having a common governor-general for the two dominions as he himself coveted this post. Mountbatten warned that this would be disastrous to Pakistan but Jinnah did not relent.

With hard bargaining, some tub-thumping and an acrimonious controversy a final draft of the Bill for Indian Independence was prepared to which the contribution of the Indian leaders was not negligible.

A review of this volume would not be complete without a mention of some of the vignettes:

—After the June 2 meeting of the Indian leaders when the plan for the transfer of power

and partition was unfolded Nehru, Jinnah and Baldev Singh were asked to broadcast.

—In his speech Nehru said characteristically, "We are little men serving great causes, but because the cause is great, something of that greatness falls upon us also." Jinnah, on the other hand, depicted from his script and made in propagandist speech.

—Rammurty, an appointed acting governor of Bombay for two weeks, Mountbatten wrote back home that Rammurty had brought 16 of his relatives to the Government House and also entertained lavishly.

—When Gandhi and Jinnah met at the viceregal lodge, these two great men were inaudible to each other as they spoke in a very low voice. Mountbatten had to bring their chairs closer.

—The American Ambassador, Mr. Grady, made a false statement. Even after the British government's declaration of the withdrawal of power from India and of their going ahead with the legislation to that end, Grady at his press conference in Singapore declared that America wanted to help Indians to independence. One of the minor Congress leaders remained to Mountbatten that, "some people take time to grow up."

—Jinnah thought that the judges in the federal court were no patch on those in the privy council.

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Although Mountbatten scuttled the Cabinet Mission Plan and hustled through his own Partition Plan which sowed so much bitterness among Hindus and Muslims, he so charmed our leaders and people that he was invited to be the first Governor-General of free India. And when he left us, a year later, he was hailed as a true saviour. But was he really so?

by Dr. Rafiq Zakaria

**M**OUNTBATTEN is an enigmatic figure in the annals of modern India. He came to this country to replace Wavell as the Viceroy, when the final negotiations for the transfer of power had reached their most critical stage. He managed to scuttle the Cabinet Mission Plan, which would have salvaged the unity of India, and hustled through his own Partition Plan of June 3, 1947, which caused the greatest human misery, and sowed such bitterness among the Hindus and Muslims that, though more than three decades have passed since, then, their relations continued to be estranged. But Mountbatten so charmed our leaders and people that he was invited to be the first Governor-General of free India and, when he left us, a year later, he was hailed as a true saviour. But was he really so? The celebrated authors of *Freedom at Midnight*, Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, who were mainly influenced in writing their monumental work *Freedom at Midnight* by Mountbatten, have now come out with a book, entitled *Mountbatten and Independent India*. The earlier volume in this series was *Mountbatten and the Partition of India*. The present volume, published in 1984, comprises two parts. The first consists of Mountbatten's interviews with the two authors and the second of the secret reports of the critical years 1947-48 submitted by him and the Governors of various provinces. The interviews took place 25 years after the events in question, but Mountbatten's recollections serve to underline what is contained in these reports.

Take, for instance, his insistence that Kashmir should join Pakistan; no Pakistani could have put the case better. Here is Mount-

his life. If things went wrong, since he said that Gandhi's plotters had by no means all been laid by the heels."

The authors give an account of how, according to Mountbatten, Nehru and Patel asked him to run India for them. This, we are told, happened soon after the transfer of power. It is an egoistical account that is difficult to believe; there has been no corroboration of it from any other source. In

so faulty that it led to the death of millions of innocent peo-

# Was he a



ESSAY IN SELF-GLORIFICATION: Mountbatten.

batten's version: "I must tell you honestly. I wanted Kashmir to join Pakistan. For, one simple reason, it made Pakistan more viable. They had 85 per cent Muslims. I persuaded Patel with some difficulty to let me give the Maharaja his assurance that India would not object if he acceded to Pakistan. I was miserable when the whole thing went wrong but Hari Singh was such a bloody fool."

Mountbatten also claims that he knew that East Pakistan would separate: "The whole concept of two different peoples being held together over all those miles by the same religion was absolute nonsense." When did this realisation dawn on him? After the birth of Bangladesh? For there is not a shred of evidence in his notes and reports of 1947-48 to this effect. On the contrary he worked hard with Jinnah to see that this "absolute nonsense" was turned into a reality as quickly as possible.

It can, however, be conceded that his involvement was more with West Pakistan and its sturdy and good-looking Punjabi and Frontier people. He was not only attached to them but wanted that they should continue to be the strong arm of the British Commonwealth. As he elaborates with candour: "But West Pakis-

tan was something else. I wanted it to work. I wanted it to be viable. After all, I was responsible for it. I wanted Kashmir with them. I did not want to muck up my own creation." If Kashmir became a problem for us, it was largely due to Mountbatten whom we chose as free India's first head of state and whom the shrewd Mr. Jinnah refused to accept as a common Governor-General for the two new dominions.

Mountbatten was a pucca sahib. He was too proud of his royal lineage and, therefore, could not help being patronising to ordinary Indians.

Again, after the tribal invasion of the Valley at the instigation of Pakistan — raids that were repelled by the freedom fighters, led by Sheikh Abdullah, with the support of India's armed forces — it was Mountbatten who forced Nehru to agree to the idea of a plebiscite in the state and to

with an your and without perience, then leave us without any experience or knowledge of how to do it. Will you run the country?"

deterred by the challenges they faced as the rulers of free India. They were too courageous and

**Mountbatten And Independent India : 16 August 1947-18 June 1948 : By Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre (Vikas Publishing House, 1984, Rs. 125)**

... saw him, he raised his hand and said, "Dickie, stop. What you did in India is as though you'd struck me across the face with a riding whip."



# friend of India?



**THE FORMIDABLE DUO:** The only Indian leaders for whom Mountbatten had mixed feelings of affection and awe were Sardar Patel (left) and Jawaharlal Nehru (right).

refer the dispute that had arisen between the two new countries to the United Nations. In his "Top Secret" report of February 10, 1948, Mountbatten records, "I told Pandit Nehru that I remained unashamed and unrepentant at having persuaded him to make a reference to UNO in connection with Kashmir. I said that I was sure that history would prove me right in having done this, and that I hoped that he himself would agree with this view one day." Not only Nehru, but Patel also was perturbed at this reference, as Mountbatten admits in his "Top Secret" report of February 14, 1948: "He was depressed at not being able to withdraw the reference to UNO; and he was depressed about the outcome of the award. For he feared that Pandit Nehru's position in the country would be unsafe; and in fact he feared for his life if things went wrong; since he said that Gandhi's plotters had by no means all been laid by the heels."

The authors give an account of how, according to Mountbatten, Nehru and Patel asked him to run India for them. This, we are told, happened soon after the transfer of power. It is an egoistical account that is difficult to believe; there has been no corroboration of it from any other source. In

fact during their interview of him, Mountbatten admitted he had not kept any record of the conversation in question with Nehru and Patel. He explains, "It wasn't done at the time, it was too hot. What is going to come is very hot and I wouldn't put it down. It is only now, after 25 years, that I can tell it."

As the number of people emigrating from Pakistan was far in excess of what Nehru and Patel feared it would be and as, according to Mountbatten, they could not control and manage the situation, Nehru is quoted to have told the noted British admiral: "While you were exercising the highest command in the war, we were in prison. You're a professional, a high-level administrator. We're not even amateurs, we just know nothing. You can't just turn over this country to us, having stayed with us all our lives with all your knowledge and experience, then leave us without any experience or knowledge of how to do it. Will you run the country?"

Nehru added further, according to Mountbatten, "You must understand, you have got to take it. We pledge ourselves. We will do whatever you say. We'll be far more obedient than when you were Viceroy. Please take over the country."

Mountbatten said, "Well, look, it's terrible, for if it were known that you'd turned over the country to me, you'd be finished. You'd be a laughing stock. The Indians keep back the British Viceroy and then turn the country back to him. This is out of the question."

To this Patel and Nehru are supposed to have replied, "Well, we may find ways of disguising this, but if you don't do it, we can't manage it."

Can anyone, familiar with the character of Nehru and Patel, believe such nonsense? It does not stand to reason that the two giants of our freedom struggle, who had fought a mighty empire, would be deterred by the challenges they faced as the rulers of free India. They were too courageous and

**Mountbatten And Independent India : 16 August 1947-18 June 1948 : By Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre (Vikas Publishing House, 1984, Rs. 125)**

How so faulty that it led to the death of millions of innocent people.

... saw him, he raised his hand and said, "Diddle, stop. What you did in India is as though you'd struck me across the face with a riding whip."



# Rich tribu

People gathered around the statue of the late Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru at the inauguration of the statue at the Parliament House on Saturday.

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alleged. His acc... a reflection of his megalomania than a recollection of the real state of affairs. In fact, Nehru's statement in September, 1947, is exactly opposite of this and nails the lie: "We have faced and are facing the gravest crisis that any government can have to face, more especially a new government. The consequences of each step that we might take are bound to be far-reaching. The world is watching us also and the world opinion counts. But above all we are watching ourselves and if we fall in our estimation, who will rescue us?"

Mountbatten's lack of understanding of the Indian political situation is best illustrated by an

ple on either side of the border and in the uprooting of many millions. He neither anticipated the holocaust nor did he prepare for it. The operation was successful, as they say, but the patient almost died. If the country recovered subsequently it was entirely due to the foresight and sagacity of Nehru and the iron will displayed by Patel at this critical juncture.

To compare Mountbatten to Attlee or Cripps or even Pethick-Lawrence is absurd. The latter were genuine friends, with deep socialist roots, in real sympathy with India's aspirations. Mountbatten was a pucca sahib. He might have been fond of Nehru, because of his Harrow and Cambridge background, and awed by Patel, because he stood no nonsense from anyone, but he instinctively

He was admittedly a good soldier, a competent commander, an efficient organiser and one of the best public relations men the British had. But he had hardly any insight into the Indian character, much less into the making of some of our foremost freedom fighters and statesmen.

amusing suggestion he made at the instance of his wife in regard to his successor as Governor-General. Rajaji, by consensus among the Congress leaders was to take over from him. But Lady Mountbatten suddenly developed a "brainwave" and suggested the name of Sardar Patel. Mountbatten jumped at it. But Nehru was not sure what the Sardar's reaction would be. He asked Mountbatten to broach the subject with the Deputy Prime Minister. When he did, as Mountbatten has himself recorded in his note of the interview on April 20, 1948, Patel "roared with laughter."

This book about Mountbatten is an essay in self-glorification; it reflects poorly on his political acumen. He was, admittedly, a good soldier, a competent commander, an efficient organiser and one of the best public relations men the British had. His charm was devastating. But from his interviews and secret reports in this book it is evident that he had hardly any insight into the Indian character, much less into the making of some of our foremost freedom fighters and statesmen who never took to public life as a game of chess. They were serious and dedicated men to whom India's freedom was their life breath.

Mountbatten could not fathom the working of their inner minds. True, he was a man of great drive and, as they say, nothing succeeds like success. It must be remembered he came on the scene in India when our leaders were tired of the struggle and despaired of a way out of the impasse created by Jinnah. With his consummate tact, he took advantage of the situation and pushed through partition. However, his plan of action was so faulty that it led to the death of millions of innocent peo-

tively looked down upon ordinary Indians. He was too proud of his royal lineage and, therefore, could not help being patronising to ordinary Indians. They were nothing better than subjects of his cousin, King George IV. They needed to be looked after. There are many anecdotes narrated by him in this book which show this side of him.

Mountbatten came to India first in 1921 with the Prince of Wales as his companion. On his visit to Kashmir, the Prince was upset by the behaviour of an Indian sub-inspector and called him a "bloody fool."

According to Mountbatten, the sub-inspector came the next day to see Sir Arthur Lodder, the British resident, and requested him to repeat what the Prince had said about him. But why? And this, narrates Mountbatten, was the reply of the sub-inspector, "Because every remark by the Prince of Wales is an honour to my family, and I want to put it down in my family records." So the sub-inspector wrote, "I am happy to record the remarks which H.R.H. deigned to pass on this occasion. He said, 'What the hell does the bloody fool want?'"

This is how Mountbatten remembers India and Indians, claiming fondness and affection for them, but in reality with the sneering air of one belonging to the master race. No doubt he helped India at the time of independence, but he was cast in the Churchillian mould and he recounts with regret the encounter he had with his mentor after he finally returned to London on relinquishing his exalted office in New Delhi. They met at a dinner at Buckingham Palace. As Churchill saw him, he raised his hand and said, "Dickie, stop. What you did in India is as though you'd struck me across the face with a riding whip."



## A Thought for The Week

*It's always our touches of vanity that manage to betray us.*  
— CHRISTOPHER FRY

# Friend Or Foe?

It speaks for our lack of maturity as a modern political community that we think of foreign leaders as being either our friends or our foes. They are neither. They are just foreigners out to serve their national interests as they perceive them. Occasionally their perception of their interests may converge with our appreciation of our interests and a degree of cooperation or even intimacy may, therefore, ensue. But however long such a period, it cannot in the nature of things last. We made this discovery in relation to Chou En-lai in the sixties. And we have been under pressure to take a second look at our appreciation of Mountbatten since *Freedom at Midnight* by Larry Collins and Dominique Lapiere appeared some years ago. We have by and large shirked this issue. But the publication of *Mountbatten and Independent India* by the same authors, reviewed elsewhere in this issue by Rafiq Zakaria, must make it difficult for a sensitive and self-respecting Indian to continue to do so.

Mountbatten was nothing if not extremely vain. He thought no end of himself. This much has been known fairly widely, though it has not been equally well known that the man planned his own funeral in the greatest possible detail and engaged in an extensive correspondence with the Government of India to make sure that this country would be "suitably" represented at that "historic" occasion. It has also been known that he was anxious to show Nehru and Sardar Patel in a poor light and that he was primarily responsible for persuading Nehru to take the Jammu and Kashmir issue to the United Nations and to offer to hold a plebiscite there under U.N. auspices. But it must come as a surprise to most of us that he regarded Pakistan as his own creation and that he should have wanted Jammu and Kashmir to go to Pakistan in order to ensure its success. Apparently he knew nothing of the history and psychology of the Kashmiri people who realised in 1947 itself that they would be reduced to the status of drawers of water and hewers of wood in Pakistan. More important, he knew nothing of the nature of Indian nationalism and the character of its leaders who even in their worst crisis did not think in narrow communal terms. But the tragedy of it all is not that he thought and behaved the way he did but that our leaders allowed themselves to be taken in by so patronising and superficial a character.

The explanation is a long and complicated one. But some points stand out. Our leaders, for example, did not fully recognise the obvious truth that Britain had decided to quit India essentially because it was too exhausted to be able to manage the empire. Or else they would not have felt so beholden to the British. It is even more shocking that in their excitement over the achievement, they should have been more than ready to forget what they had said all their lives — that the British had deliberately followed a policy of divide and rule and thereby set in motion a process of which partition was only the culmination. It is equally remarkable that even though they had dealt with him for so many years, they did not understand Jinnah sufficiently to anticipate in advance that he would never accept a joint governor-general for the two new dominions. So they allowed themselves to be convinced that as joint governor-general Mountbatten would be able to ensure that partition and transition to independence were relatively smooth.

They were good men and good men tend to be rather innocent. Mountbatten certainly took them for a ride on the Kashmir issue. The price for the country has been heavy, too heavy in fact to be measured. Mercifully, Sardar Patel did not fall in for another of Mountbatten's many "brilliant" ideas. Mountbatten wanted the Sardar to succeed him as the governor-general. If the Sardar had agreed, the result could have been equally disastrous — a clash between the head of state and the head of government at that early and crucial stage. It may not be fair to accuse Mountbatten of evil designs. He might have been only foolish in mooted the proposal. Folly goes well with vanity. But he might not have been all that simple-minded.

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# India Is Born

Mountbatten became a legend in his own life-time — and quite justifiably. The transfer of power in the sub-continent was the toughest assignment Mountbatten ever handled. It was a heart-breaking task. So dramatically had Hindu-Muslim relations deteriorated that the country was teetering on the brink of a virtual civil war. Mountbatten had quickly to take a number of critical decisions, the most important being whether he should stick to the date fixed by the British government for the transfer of power or to advance. He decided to advance it. His critics held this and other decisions by him responsible for the communal holocaust that followed. This was an unjust view. Delay in the transfer of power would have only heightened the communal tension already beyond control.

We have now for the first time, a biography of Mountbatten based on access to his papers. It is a work of obvious importance for this country.

WITH reports flowing in by July 1947 of mounting violence in the Punjab, grappling from dawn till long after dusk with the problems of dividing India, watching the days slip away from the threatening calendars on the wall, it is no wonder that the staff in Viceroy's House sometimes felt they would never survive to hail the coming of independence.

Mountbatten rode the storm, to the outward eye ebullient and vigorous as ever. Only those who worked in his intimate circle detected the exhaustion which overcame him if for an instant the pressure was relieved. He would relapse into blank and battered silence, then spring alive again when the next crisis burst around him. It was not an atmosphere in which cool and considered judgements could be hoped for; it says much for Mountbatten's stamina that any judgement was brought to bear at all.

Meanwhile Sir Cyril Radcliffe was drawing near the end of his task as head of the boundary commission set up to divide India from Pakistan. He knew only too well that his had been a butcher's, not a surgeon's, operation. Since his Hindu and Muslim colleagues had disagreed on almost every controversial issue, he had

been forced to take most of the decisions himself, and though he had done his best to reconcile the demands of race, tradition and economic necessity, it was realised by everyone that his awards would cause anguish to many millions of people on one side or other of the new frontier and appear deeply unsatisfactory to the governments of India and Pakistan.

The only hope that Mountbatten could see was that the rulers of the two new countries would each be sufficiently impressed by the indignation shown by the other party to realise that they themselves could not have been so badly treated as they had first supposed.

Early indications of boundary awards and the fierce reactions they provoked suggested that publication of the Radcliffe report before independence would lead to such open hostility as to spoil the celebrations. Mountbatten therefore persuaded Radcliffe to hand over his decisions, delivered to Viceroy's House in a single package on August 13, 24 hours before independence.

All went to plan. The awards arrived too late for study and were placed, so far as is known unlooked-at, in the safe at Viceroy's House. The leaders of India and Pakistan were summoned to a meeting on August 16 to hear

the details. The independence celebrations could take their course undisturbed.

Extraordinary importance has been given by some to this decision to withhold publication for three days. "...millions of people died or lost everything as a result," wrote Leonard Mosley (in *The Last Days of the British Raj*).

"This is a matter for Mountbatten's conscience." It is certainly possible to criticise the decision. What can be presented as a wise resolve to launch the new Dominions in an atmosphere of goodwill can be seen less charitably as a vain man's determination to let nothing mar his moment of glory. Since Mountbatten, like most people, was impelled by a complex of motives, which he rarely sought to analyse, one may assume that both elements played some part in shaping his conclusions.

It is difficult, however, to see how the postponement can have cost a single life, let alone "millions". Though no one realised it at the time, the announcement of the frontiers was to provoke vast movements of population from one new country to the other, and it was the flood of refugees across territory occupied by hostile inhabitants which provoked the bloodiest massacres. This

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was also extremely amusing.

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Next morning Mountbatten addressed the Pakistan constituent assembly. It says something about his attitude towards the two Dominions that, while he had worked and re-worked his speech in Delhi, he accepted his private secretary's draft for Karachi and professed himself too tired to do more than tinker with it. The result was eloquent but impersonal: a dutiful tribute to Jinnah, an appeal for an end to violence, an affirmation that this was not the parting of the ways but the start of a new relationship.

Then came the procession; Jinnah and Mountbatten side by side, Edwina and Fatima Jinnah in the car immediately behind them. To drive for three miles through dense crowds, knowing that every window, every group of figures, might conceal an assassin, would have tested the nerves of anyone. Mountbatten and Jinnah passed the test with aplomb, neither betraying by the slightest gesture that the occasion was anything but one of relaxed euphoria. "Bomb attack reported never materialised," noted Mountbatten briefly in his diary.

With an unusual display of emotion, Jinnah placed his hand on the viceroy's knee when they reached their destination and thanked God that he had brought his visitor back alive. "I retorted by pointing out how much more serious it would have been if he had been bumped off."

So it was back to Delhi to launch the other part of the sub-continent into independence. At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom," Jawaharlal Nehru, India's new prime minister, proclaimed randiloquently in the legislative assembly. At the stroke of the midnight hour, Mountbatten was in his study in what had almost ceased to be Viceroy's House,

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His speech to the constituent assembly was an apology for his conduct of the negotiations. He spoke of the terrifying communal violence, the threat of anarchy, which had led him to fix so early a date for the transfer of power; and expressed once more that partition was made necessary by the will of Hindus and Muslims and was decided on the lines they had dictated.

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The inevitable state banquet had to be endured. "Supposed to be no speeches but Mr. Jinnah read one and I had to make one without warning," noted Mountbatten in his diary. No one present could have detected that he had been taken by surprise. "For 10 minutes the appropriate phrases and thoughts flowed from him in smooth sequence," wrote Alan Campbell-Johnson. Mountbatten's press attaché, who is a born raconteur, and his formal but quick-firing eloquence is ideally adapted to after-dinner speech-making.

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The extent of his influence was shown by the case of Baldev Singh (the Sikh leader). Believing Baldev and Auchinleck (Field-marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck, commander-in-chief of the Indian army) would never work together, Mountbatten had persuaded Nehru not to appoint the Sikh as defence minister as had originally been proposed. Then Auchinleck and Baldev were reconciled; worse still, Nehru selected as substitute for the defence portfolio a man whom Burrows (Sir Fredrick Burrows, trade union official and governor of Bengal) described as being "so low that a snake could not crawl under his belly". Mountbatten now hastened





# India Is Bori

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phenomenon would have been no less marked if it had begun on August 12 or 13 — or even August 9 when, theoretically, some of the awards might have been available — rather than August 16. Indeed, if anything, it might have been expected that the extra three days would have allowed the Boundary Force time to mass its resources in the most seriously threatened areas — though the force in fact was to prove so inadequate that its earlier deployment would have made little difference.

Mosley's contention that, "A prior report would have given millions of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims a chance to pack their bags and leave", provokes a query: "Prior to what?" It was the report itself and the consequential migrations which did the damage — a few days one way or the other would have made no difference.

AND so the last days slipped away before the transfer of power. With his insatiable appetite for details, Mountbatten took an interest in every aspect of partition and continued to be apprised of more of them than would have seemed possible for any mere mortal. His overriding concern was that Independence Day should pass off successfully, if possible without clash between Muslim and Hindu, at all costs without tension between the British and their former colonial subjects.

It is important that the Union Jack should not be much in evidence on that day (he wrote to Sir John Colville, governor of Bombay), as we must avoid all possible risk of insult to it. Plans for one or two local ceremonies have come to my notice which seem to suggest that there may be a ceremonial lowering of the Union Jack

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...of great nobility, ... voice. ... what more ... direction of her ... the time she had ... her training in light ... the training of the ... the khayal and a teacher of the ... Altruism—Jaipur ... from Ustad Aliyad Khan of the ... Smt. Menakabai Shirodkar. Then ... was in dancing—from her mother ... fascinating. Her early ... cal scene is ... into western ... the tabla, wil-

and its replacem. It by the National flag. I hope you will somehow be able to secure that his does not happen anywhere in your Province. Nehru entirely agrees that there should be no lowering of the Union Jack, which should not appear at all on the 15th August.

The exigencies of the soothsayers, which had meant that India would become free at midnight on August 14, allowed the viceroy to attend the ceremonies at Karachi on the same day and still be back in Delhi for the critical moment. The Mountbattens flew to Karachi on August 13 and drove in state to Government House. Colonel Birnie, military secretary to Mahomed Ali Jinnah (the Muslim leader who was to be the first governor-general of Pakistan), told them that the crowds were noticeably thicker than those which had greeted Jinnah when he made a similar entry a few days before.

Less agreeably, he also reported that a plot had been discovered to throw a bomb into Jinnah's open car during the state procession the following day. The police saw little hope of arresting the conspirators before the procession took place. Jinnah was ready to go through with it, if the viceroy concurred. This was not the sort of challenge Mountbatten could resist; he at once agreed that the arrangements should be unaltered.

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alone except for Alan Campbell-Johnson.

Mountbatten was sitting quietly at his desk. I have known him in most moods; tonight there was an air about him of serenity, almost detachment. The scale of his personal achievement was too great for elation, rather his sense of history and the fitness of things at this dramatic moment when the old and the new order were reconciled in himself, called forth composure.

Quite deliberately he took off his reading-glasses, turned the keys on his dispatch boxes and summoned me to help tidy the room and stow away these outward and visible signs of viceregal activity. Although there was a whole army of servants outside, it never occurred to either of us to call them. Only when all the papers had been put away and his desk cleared were they called in.

The stage was set for Nehru and Rajendra Prasad, president of the constituent assembly, to issue a formal invitation to Mountbatten to serve as first governor-general of independent India and to submit to him a list of the new cabinet. Mountbatten had played some part in shaping the first Indian government. At a staff meeting on July 28, V. P. Menon (Hindu leader and adviser to Mountbatten) had told the viceroy that he was worried lest the cabinet should contain too many old political warhorses to whom Nehru felt he owed a debt of loyalty. Mountbatten promised to talk to Nehru about this, and stress that though, as governor-general, he would have to accept whatever advice he was given, he did have a right to know what was planned in advance and to express his views.

The extent of his influence was shown by the case of Baldev Singh (the Sikh leader). Believing Baldev and Auchinleck (Field-marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck, commander-in-chief of the Indian army) would never work together, Mountbatten had persuaded Nehru not to appoint the Sikh as defence minister as had originally been proposed. Then Auchinleck and Baldev were reconciled; worse still, Nehru selected as substitute for the defence portfolio a man whom Burrows (Sir Fredrick Burrows, trade union official and governor of Bengal) described as being "so low that a snake could not crawl under his belly". Mountbatten now hastened



batten ki jai" drowned the rest of the hubbub.

By evening when they sallied forth again, having attended a monster children's party in the afternoon, the crowd had swelled to something between 250,000 and 600,000 (most Indian statistics are similarly uncertain). Long before the coach had reached the grandstand where the flag was to be hoisted, it had become immobile in the ocean of humanity. What was supposed to be a military parade had been swamped by the cheerful, all-pervading mob. The ceremony was cut short and the carriage began to creep back to Government House, the mounted bodyguards frantically trying to clear a path without trampling the spectators underfoot or starting a panic as people pulled away from the horses' hooves.

"Jai Hind" — Long Live India — was the usual refrain, but when the official coach was near shouts of "Mountbatten ki jai" (Long live Mountbatten) "Lady Mountbatten ki jai" and even "Pandit Mount-

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It was an enormously happy occasion, yet one accident, one trivial outbreak of violence, could have provoked catastrophe. The state carriage, inching its way back from the ceremony, drew upon itself interest so overwhelming that it seemed at times as if it must vanish under the great wave of humanity around it. The Mountbattens alone would have been enough to make it the central attraction of the day; as if this was not enough, Nehru, unable to get back to his own car, joined the party and sat cross-legged upon the hood.

To end the day, 3,000 people came to an evening party at Government House. They stayed till 2 a.m. Mountbatten can hardly have slept for more than 11 or 12 hours in the previous three nights, he had been the focus of unremitting public attention, he had made four major speeches, conducted negotiations of great importance, enjoyed hardly a moment of waking relaxation. Somehow he kept going, concealing his exhaustion, endlessly charming. At last it was over. India and Pakistan were well and truly free, the first part, at least, of his task was accomplished. "I have never experienced such a day in my life," he concluded his report.

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him. He has come suddenly to see me alone on more than one occasion — simply and solely for company in his misery; to unburden his soul; and to obtain what comfort I have had to give. He has lately written me two or three letters indicating that he does not know why he is writing, except that he feels he must write to someone to get his troubles off his chest.

The two men already liked and trusted each other; in these hectic weeks they grew into complete mutual confidence and deep affection.

With the demise of the Boundary Force, collaboration between India and Pakistan grew tenuous. The prime ministers met from time to time, but it was as much to bicker as to discuss what needed to be done. Almost the only regular liaison was through the joint defence committee, where Mountbatten found himself in the awkward predicament of playing the part of neutral chairman while self-evidently the servant of one of the two parties. He managed it with grace and retained, if not the confidence of the Pakistanis at least their acceptance.

We are now under a far greater pressure than at any time since we came out here (Mountbatten told Attlee on September 12). Nevertheless I honestly feel that we are all beginning to get a grip on a well-nigh desperate situation, and I feel we shall pull through all right if none of my vital ministers are bumped off — a factor which is not impossible of fulfilment with the fear-crazed, half-mad crowds of people roaming the streets of Delhi. Mountbatten never lost heart.

In a report to Whitehall, Ismay drafted: "We are hanging on by our eyelids and it is certainly not more than even money against complete chaos." Mountbatten amended this to read: "The general position is more grave than you evidently appreciate and we are only now beginning to turn the corner." Ismay's phraseology was the more picturesque, but Mountbatten's was the voice of solute optimism; only if buoyed by optimism could the battered relics of government have the spirit to carry on. Yet the road seemed endless, book emergency committee of cabinet for a 5 hour flight over Punjab," Mountbatten noted in his diary for September 21. Campbell-Johnson was among the listeners.

Today we saw for ourselves something of the stupendous scale of the Punjab upheaval (as recorded). Even our brief bird's-eye view must have revealed nearly half a million refugees on the roads. At one point during our flight Sikh and Muslim refugees were moving in almost side by side in opposite directions. There was no sign of clash. As though impelled by some deeper instinct, they pushed forward obsessed only with the objective beyond the boundary.

Auchinleck was convinced that the solution to the problem was to take stronger measures against the Sikhs. He was particularly incensed when the government withdrew its ban on the wearing of turbans. This measure, however repugnant some of them may have been.

In the interim government that preceded independence, almost any issue provided fuel for a row between Muslim and Hindu. At a cabinet meeting Mountbatten found agreement that there should be a moratorium

looking ahead to a time of reconstruction and reconciliation. Somehow the violence was confined largely to the Punjab.

Somehow the violence was confined largely to the Punjab. In Bengal, traditionally the scene of the most ferocious communal rioting, the credit belonged largely to Gandhi.

THE Mahatma had moved to Calcutta before Independence Day and taken up his residence in the poorest quarter of the city among the untouchables. When trouble began and threatened to spread, he declared a fast unto death which was to end only if sanity returned.

The violence died away and Bengal remained tranquil. "My dear Gandhiji," wrote Mountbatten. "In the Punjab we have 55,000 soldiers and large scale rioting on our hands. In Bengal our force consists of one man, and there is no rioting. As a serving officer, as well as an administrator, may I be allowed to pay my tribute to the One Man Boundary Force."

"I've never been through such a time in my life," Mountbatten told Patricia at the end of September. "The war, the vicerealty were jokes, for we have been dealing with life and death in our own city." He was justified in his use of the past tense, for the worst was over.

As the two populations painfully disengaged, so the points of friction became less numerous.

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Protection for the trains and refugee columns grew more efficient; the forces of security expanded while the numbers of the fugitives dwindled. The re-opened railways began to draw away the army of refugees which had descended on Delhi, meetings of the emergency committee became less frequent. By October 2 Mountbatten could tell his friend Robert Neville that the government had "just about restored law and order, in the Punjab at least."

By early November the flow of refugees across the frontier had almost ceased. Sporadic outbreaks of violence still occurred and threatened to provoke wider uproar, but the authorities quickly restored order. The Punjab was bleeding and ravaged, but it was now time to begin the work of rehabilitation.

How many lives were lost can never be established with any pretence at accuracy; the records were inadequate to begin with and were usually lost in the mass migration. "A million dead" was the propagandist's slogan, but none of those who have made any attempt to base their calculations on serious analysis of the sources of information puts the figure so high. Estimates have varied between 225,000 and 500,000. Probably the most systematic attempt

face of Mountbatten's Indian achievement.

At a speech in India House when he was on a visit to London in November, the new viceroy said, "Only 100,000 people had died, he said, only a small part of the country had been affected. 'I was horrified at Dickie's speech', Ismay told his wife. '... It seems to me impossible whether one hundred thousand or a million have actually died; or whether only 3 per cent of the country is in turmoil. The essential facts are that there is human misery on a colossal scale all around one and millions are judged with due sense of proportion, he never pretended that they were less than a fearful blemish on his achievement."

Was he indeed, was anyone — to blame? That he was taken by surprise is demonstrably true. At his first meeting with Clement Attlee, Mountbatten told the prime minister he had never supposed "that the Indians could achieve self-government without the risk of further grave communal disorders". What he had failed to anticipate was the massive and panic-stricken exodus from both sides of the new partition line.

He was asked about this at his press conference on June 4 and had replied that he foresaw no such movement "because of the physical difficulty involved ... But I equally think that a measure of transfer of population will

but its clamour reverberated his ears.

On August 31 the Mountbatten had a farewell party for the ADCs. Flight-Lieutenant Beaumont, before he left for Delhi and England. The party was held up and 100 people on board were butchered. Only survivor being Beaumont. Mountbatten knew as successful as the seat. The royal was the new posterity would judge. For him to imperil his. For the sake of a more rape to sea would argue a distorted as upon his sanity. his naval future was not what he had Attlee's categories. rance that he could repay navy in June 1948.

When writing to his wife Patricia about the possibility he might stay on as general, he remarked, "once more touch and go here for several years 15th August" — a date does not suggest he was as sad as a sapsan. Murphy (an old friend) tell him how glad he was the communal carnage had ended up only after the British handed over, and how he had happened after Mountbatten's own departure. "I the governor-general replied only provide it had been well after my departure two or three days after. I do not know how I could have faced the situation if I had arrived home on the 16th. A read of his appalling misadventure."

If Mountbatten blundered did so in good faith. Some maintain joy he had proceeded at a least neck and the worst of the partition could have been averted. There would have been time to prepare people for the idea of partition, to that them to stay put; if they had on moving then the pressure could have been less. With deliberation, troops and convoys of refugees were organized and protected. There would have been disorder — but mass carnage might have been averted.

The counter-argument. Mountbatten was playing a weakening hand. The British elements in the army, the police and the civil service were rapidly run down, already reduced to a skeleton in certain tactical sectors, and it was every day more clear the rising swell of communal terrorism the Hindu and Muslim elements could not be relied to administer the law with impartiality.

A NEW initiative on Independence was the incumbent viceroy, Wavell was not the man to it. Attlee looked around for a successor and had what I described as an "inspiration". "Dickie Mountbatten stood a mile. Burma showed it. called experts had been about Aung San (the nationalist leader), and Dickie had right."

ONCE the principle of partition had been accepted was inevitable that communal would rage freely. The long period before the transfer of power, the worse the tensions the greater the threat that would spread. Today it Punjab, tomorrow Bengal, and any of the myriads in the subcontinent where and Muslim lived cheek by cheek. Two hundred thousands could have become 2m.

Since the other alternative never tried, no one can be certain that it would have proved more or less. What is evident is that people who, from the or their special knowledge with authority on the



**B** RITISHER'S inability or unwillingness to overcome their preoccupation with the 'Raj' persists even after block busters like "Gandhi", David Lean's "Passage to India", Paul Scott's "The Raj Quartet" and "Jewel in the Crown", the Ivory-Merchant's "Heat and Dust" and BBC's own TV serials on the Raj. The latest to join this 'royal' gathering is "Mountbatten: The Last Viceroy", a £12 million, six hour mini TV serial by George Walker T.V. Productions Ltd., which is currently being shot on locations in the Capital, and a few villages on the Haryana border.

One wonders if this was the only reason that led to the film as it were, of the films

trace the history of India's Freedom Struggle. It only endeavours to recreate those aspects and details relating to the 15 months period from December 1946 to June 1948. "Our story is confined to human and political dramas that took place during that 15 month period. It is the dramatic recreation of a moment, of an era. We're not judging or drawing any conclusions... we are only recreating it, as it was."

The story begins when Lord Mountbatten, aged 46, returns as the triumphant Supreme Commander of South-East Asia to England. To his surprise, he is offered the job of the Viceroy of India by Prime Minister Attlee with the express purpose of organising the end

his credits an Academy Award nomination for "Voyage of the Damned." David has been jet-setting between England and India, getting the script approved by the Government in New Delhi and making changes as and when asked to. One is also told by the producer that the powers that be seemed quite happy with the script.

The fact that the Government is being extremely helpful is evident by the fact that the huge doors of the Durbar Hall at Rashtrapati Bhavan, the access to which was denied to "Gandhi", were thrown open to "Mountbatten" along with a Presidential audience! Tom Clegg is of the opinion that the

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He is fulfilling an 18-year long ambition to play Gandhi. Already, people are of the opinion that his resemblance to Gandhiji is far greater than that of Ben Kingsley's. Sam's head is shaved every morning to keep the pate shining, and when stewards, at the hotel where he is staying, kid him about his meagre intake of

# The making of 'Mountbatten'

on the Raj period. Some are of the opinion that it is a result of the warm socio-political atmosphere between the two countries, which has led to a heightened focus on India. It is the director of "Mountbatten", Tom Clegg, who feels the cause is a very simple one. "The film producers found a good story, and decided to make a film that's all. And, when I offered this project, I took it up gladly, since it is a fascinating story, which appeals to any director, with the future of a world's population, a story about the dramas that took place then, centering around renowned figures. If not exciting, and fascinating what is?"

ling to Judith De Paul, producer of the film, "there will be unique in that, very few people in India know of the events that took place during the last of the British Raj in India when we left India, with tremendous excitement and our first day of independence was a very emotional one... even the artists are grateful to be here."

In, "a tremendously successful project" as Tom Clegg says, is not an attempt to

of the British Raj; to, in fact, be the last Viceroy. It spans the 8-month pre-partition period, from when the Viceroy gets to know the Indian leaders, and builds up a rapport with Nehru, to the horrors of the partition when Dominion Status is granted to the new countries, and Independence is gained.

Mountbatten stays on after the partition as the Governor General, and assists Nehru and Gandhi in defusing the violent incidents which marked the partition. The movie ends with the Mountbatten's return to England, after an eventful stay in India.

The T.V. serials, which are being shot on 16 m.m. film, attempt to condense the happenings of this period into 6 hourly T.V. shows. As Tom Clegg put it "We've tried hard from the historic, dramatic and production points of view to accurately build up the drama of each moment of the interval conflict, as well as the problems and beautiful moments that took place at that time".

The screen writing is by David Butler, a graduate of the Royal Academy for Dramatic Arts, who began his career as an actor, and has to

project is getting more support from the Government mainly because of its greater degree of authenticity. "It's because of the way we have put the whole project together, that we got the Durbar Hall, and 'Gandhi' didn't."

Meticulous care and a lot of time is said to have been spent over the all important aspect of casting, both here and in England. The director feels that the present cast, chosen out of the hundreds of actors and actresses who had shown interest in the film, is a marvellous selection of very gifted and talented people. "We have an excellent cast representing the characters in the film, and we have taken great pains to develop and respect the stature of all characters, especially the Indian political leaders. We even tried very hard to get an Indian to portray Nehru, but out of the 25-30 people considered for the role, we eventually chose Ian Richardson. He has been a leading actor with the Royal Shakespeare Company for over five years, and has been alternating between theatre, T. V. and films since 1970.

Sam Dastor is the person, most people are placing their money on. Sam, a Parsi, was born in Bombay. He shares a birthday with Gandhiji, and has appeared in "Yes Minister".

food, he says with a smile "I've got to look after my ribs!"

Janet Suzman, who plays Edwina Mountbatten, is another member of the cast who has a tremendous resemblance to the character she portrays. Those who have had a chance to meet her, the Rashtrapati Bhavan attendants included, are all talking of this similarity. Janet, who has been with the Royal Shakespeare Company for 11 years has innumerable theatre and film performances to her credit, besides an Academy Award nomination for her role as the Empress 'Nicholas and Alexandra' in 1973.

She candidly admits that the movie is a product of the "Indo-British love affair", and a result of the British obsession with the Raj and the royal in general. "It took the Romans 500 years to get over the loss of their Empire, at least give the British some!" she adds jokingly.

The title role of Mountbatten is played by Nichol Williams, the acclaimed British actor who is known for his role as the Welsh wizard, Merlin in "Excalibur". Jinnah is being portrayed by Polish actor Vladislav Shchepetilnikov. The other cast includes Dame Wendy Hiller as Princess Victoria, Nigel Davenport as Lord Mountbatten.

## Janet Suzman as Edwina Mountbatten

told to do some action or the other. But when the director yelled 'Action' even the other policemen joined the fray, yielding their 'lathis' like nobody's business.

Rajpath is the other location in Delhi, where a scaled down version of Gandhiji's funeral procession will be shot, using approximately 3,000 extras. The violence, destruction and agony of the partition is to be shot on location at the Haryana villages of Tilpath, Basantpur and Agwanpur. Outside Delhi and Haryana, Simla, the sum-

mer resort, would be the other major location. Word has it that the next stop after Simla is Sri Lanka, before they complete the film by February/March '85, the stipulated date.

Offers and interests for the distribution and sale have already been received from over 25 countries, according to Judith De Paul, the producer. "Arrangements have already been made for distribution on the American television network, and I would be terribly disappointed if the Indian TV does not buy it as well." So

would we, for that matter, but there are two viewpoints to this. On the negative side - is the speed of the bureaucracy and its petty functioning. On the positive side - the way the government has 'nurtured' (to quote the producer) this project. One won't be surprised if there is something in the offing! After all one does not open the Durbar Hall and offer the Presidential Bodyguards, their horses and the Delhi Police Band for nothing.

Over at Birla House, another venue for the shooting, the enthusiasm of the policemen came into focus. During a sequence which required policemen to disperse a crowd, with the help of 'lathis', the two policemen facing the camera were singled out and told to do that, and the rest





भारतीय स्टेट



# Jinnah Did No

Mohammad Ali Jinnah, architect of Pakistan, remains one of the mystery men of modern Indian history despite so much having been written about him. He was a strange leader for an avowedly communalist movement — a British-trained lawyer utterly secular in his outlook who knew little of Islam and cared even less. He waged a strange struggle; he never defined his concept of Pakistan; he never tried to find out whether it was a viable proposition; it perhaps never occurred to him that the formation of Pakistan could involve partition of Punjab and Bengal; and it is doubtful if he ever visualised the possibility of mass migrations of millions of uprooted people across the new borders.

It is possible to argue that he engaged in brinkmanship, that he finally went over the brink, and, indeed, that he was pushed over the brink by the Congress leadership which was just fed up with his antics. Such a case is not easy to swallow for most of us Indians who have grown up in the conviction that he was determined to divide the country on the basis of his infamous two-nation theory. But Ayesha Jalal presents precisely such a case and Dr. Zakaria, a keen student of the world of Islam in this century, tends to agree. This represents a major departure from the conventional view of Jinnah.

by DR. RAFIQ ZAKARIA



**D**ID the Quaid-i-Azam of the Muslims of undivided India really want Pakistan? The answer has so far been unreservedly in the positive, though there have been some doubts or suspicions in the minds of some people that Jinnah meant it as a bargaining counter with Gandhiji and other leaders of the Congress and was not serious about partitioning the sub-continent into two separate states.

No reliable evidence to this effect has so far been produced, except for the assertion by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, who was the Congress president during the crucial period (1940-46) that, but for the adverse observation of Jawaharlal Nehru on the question of the grouping of provinces, which was basic to the Cabinet Mission's plan, the unity of India could have been preserved. Azad characterised it as "one of those unfortunate events which change the course of history." The Maulana's comments on the development, made in his memoir, *Wings of Freedom*, published posthumously in Congress circles and hardly taken seriously by others; but his marshalling of facts, in support of his observation, could not be disputed.

The latest book by the Cambridge University Press, in their South Asian Study series, entitled *The Sole Spokesman*, throws a flood of light on this question. Its author Ayesha

Jalal, is a fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. She is a young Pakistani scholar, who hails from Lahore. She thanks her research supervisor, Dr. Anil Seal and some other professors like Dr. Christophor Bayly, Dr. Gordon Johnson and Ronald Robinson for their help but mentions no other notable contacts either in India or Pakistan.

Ayesha Jalal is quite objective about the role of Jinnah in Indian politics. She is neither adulatory about him; nor unnecessarily critical. She traces his career in its historical perspective and shows how cleverly he played his game to achieve, what he always intended, parity with the Congress, with which he was prepared to come to terms, but never to "surrender, submerge or submit." He felt not only ignored but humiliated by "the high command of the Congress, which is developing into a totalitarian and authoritative caucus." He would fight it by becoming "the ally of even the devil." He told the annual session of the Muslim League in 1938, "It is not because we are in love with imperialism, but in politics one has to play one's game as on a chessboard."

Jinnah was an expert player; his moves were deft and he was often successful until the British decided to quit India. He began to fumble, when there was no empire to watch the fortunes of the game. Ayesha Jalal, through facts and documents, shows how Jinnah bluffed all through about Paki-

stan and that he was most unhappy when it came about, in "a moth-eaten and truncated form", much against his own wish. But he had gone too far and his close lieutenants and associates would not have allowed him to retreat.

He was anxious for a face-saver. As he privately admitted to Woodrow Wyatt, personal assistant to Sir Stafford Cripps, he would be "prepared to concede a lot more than might appear at first sight." But Jinnah's strategy was that of a lawyer, who relied on a leisurely timetable; he did not realise, in the words of Jalal "that India was about to be bundled into a snap decision by a raj suddenly anxious to quit."

It is this unexpected decision by the British, which completely upset Jinnah's apple-cart. He was used to his moves on the chessboard but the chessboard itself was being taken away. That is why his bargain of Pakistan turned out to be a millstone round his neck. Had he been serious about it, why did he not spell it out, despite repeated requests from many quarters? Why did he not appoint a committee of experts to work out the details? Why did he not explain the nature of Pakistan and the consequences of its formation to the Muslims in minority provinces? Until the last, why did he not formulate the outlines of the scheme? Surely the result of his demand could not have escaped his shrewd mind; as Jalal has observed, "Yet the most striking fact about Pakistan is how

it failed to satisfy the interests of the very Muslims, who are supposed to have demanded its creation."

In the end, as Jalal points out, the main centres of Muslim population, the Punjab and Bengal, were sliced in two. In both provinces, Muslims enjoyed increasing autonomy and enormous power. Their partition deprived Muslims of the benefits of undivided resources. Moreover, Muslim Punjab lost the fertile eastern districts of Ambala, Ludhiana and Jullander. On the eastern side, "Muslim Bengal lost Calcutta, its capital city and economic heart", as well as the hinterlands of West Bengal, breaking its identity as a province proud of its common culture, language and distinctive traditions.

"Stripped of Calcutta and western Bengal, eastern Bengal was reduced to the status of an over-populated rural slum, capable neither of being defended from external attack nor of being developed as an equal partner inside a Muslim state. As for Muslim minorities in other provinces of British India, they were left high and dry inside a country over which their more numerous co-religionists to the east and west had no influence."

The more one delves into the past, the more one is convinced that the partition of the country was neither inevitable nor desirable. The tragedy took place not because it could not have been avoided but because of the lure of power, which attracted the aging leaders, in a desperate hurry to grab it at any cost.

When the Cabinet Mission came to India, Jinnah was forced to reveal something of his hand, particularly since the mission's propos-

tionally undefined. The Quaid, more the despairing utterances of someone at bay."

Continued on Page IV

two-nation theory and never will." On July 12, 1947, he said that though "15th August is the deadline for the division of India ... God can upset the plans

began to slip. Jalal describes this cogently, step by step, and shows how he was driven from one desperate position to another, with the





Liaquat Ali Khan



Jawaharlal Nehru

# Jinnah did not want Pa

Continued from Page I

It was under these circumstances that he agreed to the League's fateful resolution of "direct action" and declared that he had bid "goodbye to constitutional methods." This must have gone against his grain; he was nothing but a constitutionalist, who enjoyed and thrived on its legal niceties. He left the Congress in the early 1920s because he could not stomach Gandhi's mass campaigns; in the evening of his life he had to surrender to these methods, which must have wrenched his heart. For the first time he ceased to be a leader and became a victim of the mass hysteria, which he was now unable to control. Neither in the League resolution nor in his statement were there any details or directives about the so-called "direct action." He had kept the launching of the "coming struggle" in his hands. He was to decide the time and method "as and when necessary."

Jalal comments, "So the Quaid-i-Azam, that warrior of the council chamber, that master of dialectic and dialogues, did not overnight turn into a rabble-rouser. He knew better than any one else just how ramshackle was his organisation, the victim of his deliberate neglect and of the inherent constraints of Muslim politics, and how little capable it was of launching and controlling agitations below, whether now, tomorrow or in the foreseeable future." Jinnah was aware of the danger that the resolution posed; but as Sir F. Muelie, the governor, disclosed in his confidential note to the viceroy the chief minister of Sind told him that had Jinnah "not agreed to something of this

sort, feeling was so strong that he would have been swept aside."

The League nominated August 16, 1946 as the day of "direct action"; Jinnah appealed to his followers to make it "a day of peaceful reflection", emphasising that it should not be a day for "resorting to direct action in any form or shape." But like King Canute, Jinnah's appeal fell on deaf ears; the underworld of Calcutta took charge and India witnessed one of the worst communal massacres in its annals. After this, the Congress wanted nothing to do with Jinnah. He desperately tried for a face-saving device.

to the Congress now. The entry of the League representatives into the interim government at the Centre made the situation worse; their behaviour towards Nehru and his colleagues did not mend matters. On the contrary it led to more bitterness between the Congress and the League.

According to one source, the League ministers were acting at the behest of Liaquat Ali Khan, who did not keep Jinnah in touch with the day-to-day working of the League ministers. Their Quaid, in any case, was too tired and sick to bother; he died of cancer a year later.

**"On behalf of the Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims, who were slaughtered in their hundreds of thousands, and the refugees who in their millions stumbled fearfully across the frontiers of the two states the historian has a duty to challenge Mountbatten's contention and ask whether this 'great operation' was not in fact an ignominious scuttle."**

His lieutenant in Bengal, Sir Nazimuddin confessed that if the Congress accepted the grouping of provinces unequivocally, Jinnah would accept the Cabinet Mission's plan and save India from being partitioned; some of Jinnah's other colleagues assured Lord Wavell, the viceroy, that the Quaid-i-Azam was in a chastened mood and would be prepared to eat his own words on the question of Pakistan. But too much blood had flowed for sanity to return; the once sought-after Jinnah had become anathema

Effective control, it appears, had begun to pass into the hands of Khan, who, as finance member, had presented a budget, which created a furore in business circles. He regretted that his critics saw Pakistan in everything he did. "If I talk of zonal planning and economic development of the country, they see Pakistan in that," he said. "Today the whole of India is one and if I ruin one part I am definitely ruining the other." His bona fides, however, remained suspect, with the Congress.

In the midst of all this bloody turmoil and senseless bickering Lord Wavell, who tried hard to rescue Jinnah from the inescapable position in which he had landed himself, was dismissed by Atlee, the British prime minister, and in his place Lord Mountbatten arrived as the new viceroy to complete the transfer of power to Indian hands. An extremely shrewd operator he hastened the process of partition and produced a schism which satisfied Nehru, Sardar Patel and the other Congress leaders but considerably upset Jinnah. The Mountbatten proposal envisaged a truncated Pakistan with the partitioning of Bengal and Punjab. Jinnah, as the record of his interview with the new viceroy dated April 8, 1947 shows, begged Mountbatten "not to destroy the unity of Bengal and the Punjab which had national characteristics in common: common history, common ways of life; where Hindus have strong feelings as Bengalis or Punjabis than they have as members of the Congress." Jalal rightly comments, "Hardly the word of a man committed to partitioning India on communal lines."

As the days passed, Jinnah became more and more distressed. Mountbatten urged him to work out the outline of Pakistan by cutting out the Muslim majority districts from the northwest and east of India. Jinnah refused and instead asked the Congress proposals for partitioning Punjab and Bengal that he could offer his proposals. Jalal remarks, "In his desperation even made the mad suggestion that he should be given

their millions across the frontiers of the two states, the historian has a duty to challenge Mountbatten's contention and ask whether this 'great operation' was not in fact an ignominious scuttle."

to this fact. Gifted with intelligence and being very ambitious, he looked upon the comparatively less gifted leaders of the Congress with derision because they did not measure up to him in skill and craftiness, which were such essentials in politics.

was not blinding. In any event, he was too proud a man to demean himself by going back on it. His right-hand men had precious little to do with it.

Let me make one point which concerns Indian Muslims. "Why did he not explain the nature

Jinnah was against the partition of India is only a half-truth. He was against was the of the then states of Punjab and Bengal.

N. S. HUZUR

THE SOLE SPOKESMAN: by Ayesha Jalal (Cambridge University Press, Rs. 150)



(4)

# The Royal Radical

Mountbatten was so proud of his royal descent he spent much of his spare time tracing his ancestors back to the Emperor Charlemagne. He was also a committed professional naval officer. These are not the normal ingredients of a radical mind. But Mountbatten was far from being the blimp of convention. He was often radical — even left-wing — in his attitudes.

In this week's extract from "Mountbatten", Philip Ziegler shows just how unorthodox his views could be on two important issues of the modern world: the nuclear bomb and colonial independence.

IN 1943 Mountbatten was made supreme allied commander in South-East Asia. Two years later he accepted the Japanese surrender. But the most difficult period of his command was still to come.

Mountbatten insisted that the Japanese surrender be seen to be complete. Unlike the American supreme commander in the Pacific, General MacArthur, he made sure that in his zone swords were surrendered by all senior officers in formal ceremonies in front of their men.

He himself attended a surrender ceremony in Singapore on September 12, 1945. Afterwards he wrote in his diary: "I have never seen six more villainous, depraved or brutal faces in my life. I shudder to think what it would have been like to be in their power. When they got off their chairs and shambled out, they looked like a bunch of gorillas, with great baggy breeches and knuckles almost trailing on the ground."

Another American general, Arnold, found Mountbatten particularly vengeful about the Japanese royal family. They were all morons, inbred and degenerate. He wrote in his diary that Mountbatten said "the royal

family should all be liquidated. He knows them personally."

But Mountbatten was far from hostile to the aspirations of those people he had helped to liberate from the Japanese. With the Japanese surrender, he inherited responsibility for 128 million people and one-and-a-half square miles of territory, including Burma, Malaya, Singapore, Siam, French Indochina and the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia). He needed urgently to establish his attitude towards the burgeoning nationalist movements which had sprung up in the shadow of the Japanese occupation and now thrived in the sunshine of liberation.

Mountbatten was influenced by two main considerations. The first was practical and military: it was his job to maintain stable government and he could not do that by waging civil wars which he lacked the resources to conduct. If the independence movements were too strong to ignore, then the only course was to come to terms with them.

The second was personal and idealistic. He believed that people should be allowed as far as possible to control their own destiny. The territories of South-East Asia might not yet be ready for full independence, but the aspirations of their peoples

could not be ignored. It must be made clear to them that the former imperial powers accepted that they were on the road to self-government. Both these considerations led him to take up positions which, to the more conservative of those who served under him, seemed radical and misguided.

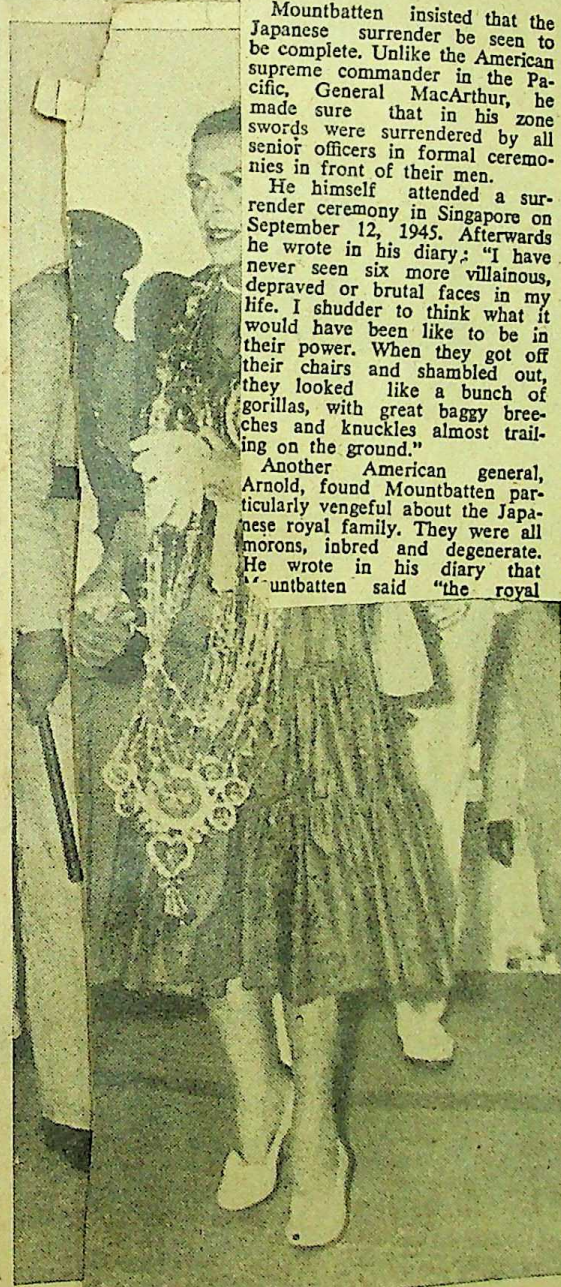
Some critics labelled Mountbatten "as too inclined to the left, too ready to listen to upstart leaders in the emergent liberation forces. It would be fairer, I think, to say that he recognised more quickly than many that the old status quo could never be restored."

The critics were not necessarily wrong-headed. Recognising the emergent liberation forces often meant abandoning more traditional and conservative elements which had loyally supported the colonial rulers in the past. There was a body of moderate opinion among the local inhabitants that might have rallied to a determined attempt by the returning western powers to reassert their full authority.

Some accused Mountbatten of being an unconscious servant of international Marxism, probably under the malign influence of (his old friend) Peter Murphy. Mr. Ullius Amoss, who ran an organisation in the United States known as International Services of Information, went still farther in and announced that he had positive evidence that Mountbatten was himself "deeply involved with the Communist Party".

Certainly Mountbatten was not scared of the word, nor was he inclined to label nationalist movements communist merely because they adopted left-wing policies and were hostile to the West.

In Malaya, at least, he proved to have been naive in his assessment of the political philosophy of the independence movements. He erred, however, not because he was "soft on communism", still less because he had any sympathy for it, but from an over-readiness to assume the best of those with whom he had dealings.



"It would continue to influence the Government of India after V. Ganapathy.

## Continuing excerpts from "Mountbatten" (fourth instalment).

"YOU know Nehru", Wavell had written, "quixotic, emotional, socialist." Mountbatten had taken greatly to Nehru when they first met at Singapore. He admired the charm, intelligence, radicalism tempered with worldly-wise sophistication; he believed — quite wrongly — that he understood the way Nehru's mind worked and — quite rightly — that Nehru responded warmly to his affection and respect. "Pandit Nehru struck me as most sincere," he began his record of their first meeting.

JINNAH had warned Mountbatten that Gandhi wielded vast power but had no responsibility; he could make arrangements, impossible but would agree to nothing. Mountbatten accepted the essential correctness of the comment but was still fascinated and delighted by Gandhi's personality. The Mahatma called on 31 March, and stayed two-and-a-quarter hours; again on 1 April,

for two hours; again on 2 and 3 April. Wavell had quickly grown irritated by the time spent on his conclusive conversations with a man he regarded as at the best evasive, at the worst a charlatan. Mountbatten, on the contrary, said he was ready to spend ten hours with him if necessary. "He is deeply impressed with him," noted Alan Campbell-Johnson, "and thinks he is still of the first importance." "An old poppet," was the viceroy's affectionate if not wholly adequate description of his visitor.

Sardar Patel was the Tammany Hall boss of the Congress Party: tough, unscrupulous, knowing, a pragmatist concerned with the realities of power, indifference to abstract theorising. Nehru and he viewed each other with suspicion and some distaste, most of the time, however, remembering that they were indispensable to each other. Mountbatten found Nehru

Continued on Page IV



# His Political Testament

Continued from Page 1

vastly the more sympathetic, but felt surer of his ground in discussion with Patel.

At their first meeting the viceroy recorded that Patel was "most charming", but later encounters were not always so harmonious. Some time after his meeting with Patel of 24 April, Mountbatten added to the record a note of a sharp dispute which he explained he had omitted before "to avoid inflaming British staff opinion against him (Patel)". Mountbatten objected to the tone of a memorandum Patel had circulated, Patel flew into a rage. Mountbatten reciprocated and insisted Patel withdraw the memorandum. Patel refused, whereupon Mountbatten said that either Patel must leave the government or he would resign as viceroy. "Patel suddenly realised that I meant business and completely collapsed, from henceforth he was respectful and helpful."

THE viceroy was never to gain any pleasure from his meetings with Mr. Jinnah — a form of address that he continued to use in his most private and information engagement diary when every other Indian was given a first name or bare surname. Mountbatten argued endlessly the case for a unified India. Jinnah "offered no counter-arguments. He gave the impression that he was not listening." It was more than an impression; to all intents and purposes he was not listening; he had made up his mind. His attitude was an affront to Mountbatten's conviction that everyone was susceptible to reason. Until he had met Jinnah he had not thought it possible that "a man with such a complete lack of sense of responsibility could hold the power which he did."

MOUNTBATTEN was properly sceptical about this, but he could not fail to be struck by other evidence of Nehru's declining powers. In June 1962 Nehru's sister, Mrs. Pandit, had written to ask him to plead with her brother to take things more easily and delegate responsibility. What could he do? In recent years "the only person who could control him was darling Edwina and she is no longer with us." "You have all my loving thoughts and sympathy for your agony in realising that your wonderful brother is ill and losing his grip," he concluded. "It must be unbearably painful to you."

On his visits to Delhi in May 1963 and again in January 1964 he was horrified by the incompetence and rampant corruption. "With Jawaharlal's (sic) illness there is a complete lack of leadership. Everybody is very pessimistic about the future. Several people have said to me: why don't you come back and run the country again?" From Rangoon he wrote to Nehru to urge him to get rid of day-to-day adminis-

trative detail, to appoint additional ministers, to cut out public meetings and responsibilities. On one small point he had persuaded the Prime Minister to delegate responsibility. "Thank you", he wrote, "for saying that Richard Attenborough may correspond with Indira in future about the Gandhi film."

Otherwise Nehru seemed resolved to cling to all his powers. I got the distinct impression that at the back of your mind was the feeling that you would like to go on working at full pressure and die in harness. That is what Edwina did to the great distress of all who loved her whom she left behind. But you owe to India whose independence and greatness is due to you, the continuation of your overall leadership for as many more years as possible. So do please do what is best for India.

Nehru died four months later. Mountbatten, accompanied by his daughter Pamela, represented the Queen at the funeral.

DURING this visit he had a long conversation with Indira

Gandhi, who had recently been appointed the second senior cabinet minister after Nanda, the acting Prime Minister. Nanda, Mountbatten thought, was a nice man but unfit to rule the country, if only because he always consulted an astrologer before taking any decision. Morarji Desai was "extremely able and clever" but an old-style capitalist and out of place in contemporary India. Chavan, the minister of defence, had a record of violence which might bar further promotion. "I had a feeling that this left Indira as a favourite in the field for Prime Minister."

THE pressures of his work with the defence staff could never distract Mountbatten for long from the affairs of India. Their armed forces were his special preoccupation. The Minister of Defence, Krishna Menon, proved a sad source of worry. When he failed to answer four consecutive letters from the CDS, Mountbatten wrote to him to remonstrate. "I can only hope that this does not mean that you have now decided to end the friendship between us which has existed for

so many years," then, with touch of menace, "if you feel unable to deal with me, I will discuss the question with the Prime Minister."

MOUNTBATTEN'S political testament was enshrined in a document which he sent to Nehru, Patel and Rajagopalachari on 19 June 1948. "I am not for one moment expecting you to be guided by this memorandum," he wrote with unconvincing modesty, "for it would be gross conceit if I were to try and continue to influence the Government of India after my departure. On the other hand, I have done so much thinking about the future of India that I felt it would not be right not to put some of my thoughts down on paper before leaving." Then followed a ragbag of recommendations, almost all of them sensible and practical, which in their mixture of the significant and the trivial, are wholly characteristic of their author.

**Cabinet Reconstruction:** Reshuffles were desirable at frequent intervals if ministers were not to grow stale and overworked. "I think that every nine or 12 months or so the Prime Minister should consider whether changes would not be profitable."

**Cabinet ministers' portfolios:** No one man should handle too many. "I do, with all respect, suggest that it is asking too much of the Prime Minister to expect him to hold the foreign affairs portfolio as well."

**Junior ministerial posts:** "I have looked in vain for a younger generation who can eventually take the place of the present generation of political leaders." Junior ministers should be appointed with the specific intention of training them for high office.

**Appointment of ambassadors and governors:** These should sometimes at least be selected from the civil service. "I do not think the importance of ambassadors and governors being chosen not only for their own qualities but also for those of their wives is yet fully appreciated in India."

**Press conferences:** "General press conferences about nothing in particular should be avoided. . . . My own experience has always been that to talk freely and frankly to press correspondents and give them the full story, prefacing of course certain parts of the conversation with the remark that 'This is off the record,' is the best method."

**Corruption and nepotism:** This was on the increase. "The undue lowering of the standard of living among the higher wage groups . . . is likely to lead to a lowering of their normal standards" of probity.

**Air conditioning:** If the government was to function properly in Delhi this was essential not only in offices but also in the bedrooms of the more important government servants.

This list is as interesting for what was missing as for what was included. Another man would have written of the principles of democratic government, individual freedom, justice, the rule of law

Excerpted from "Mountbatten" by Philip Ziegler (Collins, £





# On board the Kelly

MOUNTBATTEN  
11

**D**URING his early days as chief of combined operation, (to which he was promoted after his exploits on the Kelly) Mountbatten had little time for any activity outside his duties. Of one duty, however, he made a pleasure. In July 1941 he and Edwina went with Noel Coward to the cinema. Afterwards, wrote Coward, "Dickie told the whole story of the sinking of Kelly. Absolutely heartbreaking and so magnificent. He told the whole saga without frills and with a sincerity that was very moving. He is a pretty wonderful man, I think."

Coward now conceived the idea of making a propaganda film about life on a British destroyer which would be modelled on the Kelly. Mountbatten took to the idea with delight; discussed every detail of the scenario; took Coward to call on the first lord of the admiralty and the minister of information, Brendan Bracken; paid frequent visits to Denham studios; and invited the king and queen to inspect work in progress.

He was involved in the casting even of the minor roles. Bernard Miles was summoned to a studio in London so that some unspecified dignitaries could see a film about the home guard in which he had played a part. As he waited nervously, Mountbatten, Coward and the novelist Clemence Dane, who had written the script, swept in and settled at the front.

They watched the home guard film twice. As they left, Mountbatten glanced at Miles and said, "You'll do." "High praise, dear boy!" murmured Coward.

Mountbatten always insisted that taken care not to model too closely on Mount-

batten. "My Captain (T) is quite ordinary, with an income of about £800 a year, a small country house near Plymouth, (Mrs not Lady), two children and a cocker spaniel." This captain's social background might be different, in every particular his conduct and mannerisms when on board were modelled on Mountbatten.

Two or three of his speeches to the crew were provided by Mountbatten verbatim. The admiralty firmly denied that in any particular destroyer, but no one took the disclaimer seriously. Nor was Mountbatten at great pains to maintain the fiction. Mrs Roosevelt dined at Buckingham Palace in October 1942, to meet Mount-

...contriving to look as handsome and dashing and glamorous as his reputation. After dinner we adjourned to the cellar bomb-shelter, where we were shown the Noel Coward film *In Which We Serve*, which had just been completed. Mountbatten, of course, was model and inspiration for this film's principal character; he distracted us only slightly by keeping up throughout the screening a running fire of comments upon the experiences which had served as basis for the film's plot.

The *Daily Express* in September opened a public debate on whether it was proper for Coward to play the role of Lord Louis Mountbatten. The ministry of information began to waver. Mountbatten dined with Brendan Bracken so as to stiffen his resolution. But militancy was displayed when a senior civil servant in the ministry of information took ex-

ception to the making of a film which featured the sinking of a British warship. "It must never be shown abroad, he told the admiralty. It was batten waving the letter and demanding that the unfortunate official should be summoned. "Dickie went off like a time-bomb," Coward described the meeting. "The wretched official wilted under the tirade like a candle before a strong fire."

When Coward came to write his autobiography, he sent a draft to Mountbatten for his comments. "You may not realise it," replied Mountbatten, "but I have been greatly criticised for being a party to the making of a film which was apparently designed to boost me personally." Could it not be changed in such a way as to indicate that "my co-operation over this film was based on the understanding that it was not to be recognisable as the story of my own ship and certainly not as my own story?"

In fact it is hard to find a naval contemporary of Mountbatten who does not feel that *In Which We Serve* was a splendid piece of propaganda which did good for the service. Mountbatten himself never tired of seeing it. He went to a preview on September 27, a performance at COHQ on October 15, the screening seen by Mrs. Roosevelt on October 23 and at least a dozen others over the next decade.

Mountbatten always attributed his vendetta with Beaverbrook to shot in the film in which a copy of the *Daily Express*, dated September 1, 1939 and bearing the headline "There will be no war this year", was pictured sinking in the sea.

have to hold ladies' hands very firmly while they make a deep curtsy as they seem to steady themselves on your hand and are apt to pull themselves up by it. Occasionally I try to help them up with a tug but the result is that the ladies come whistling up much quicker than they expected and aren't grateful!"

He only took exception to the grandeur when it impeded his freedom of action, as when police tried to escort him when he went on a morning ride, or he decided to pay a visit to Simla at short notice. "It would take three days to organise," said the comptroller. "I will travel light, with a minimum of staff," said the viceroy. "In that case, I can just manage it," said the comptroller. And so a "mere skeleton staff of 180 officers and servants accompanied me. And I, in my innocence, had vaguely thought it would be rather like ordering a jeep to drive to Dimbula (his bungalow near Kandy) for the weekend."

Splendour mingled curiously with austerity. The Mountbattens ruled that, because of the near-famine in some parts of India, rationing would be imposed in Viceroy's House. Helpings were so small that the hungrier members of the staff sought invitations from the Ismays where they could be sure of a square meal. In another respect, too, the aspect of entertaining changed. "Dickie and Edwina have both got off to a magnificent start," reported Walter Monckton, adviser to the

and sitting opposite her after the Club dinner to know we could have had a wonderful time. She came round to ask for my autograph and managed to get her hand over mine long enough to indicate what she felt! Isn't it maddening I just can't do anything about it. She was just my cup of tea. Pammy was amused but luckily I don't think Mummy noticed anything.

Edwina was an invaluable ally, both through the reputation she won in the world of health and welfare, of which she had made herself the queen, and through the rapport which she established with the Indian leaders and, still more, their wives. For Mountbatten, however, she was not a comfortable companion. Fiercely competitive, she had always operated before in a different sphere to her husband: now she found herself outshone and hated the experience.

Her health was poor, her nerves on edge. At the best of times she was quick to take offence; now it was necessary to think twice at least before saying anything to her. Her husband, who found it hard to think even once, was perpetually in trouble. "The last two days have been pretty good Hell," Ismay told his wife. "Both Dickie and Edwina are dead tired, nervy as they can be, and right across each other. So that in addition to my other troubles, I have been doing peace-maker and general sedative.... It's very wearing for them, and for me."

Beaverbrook turned on Mountbatten at a dinner-party given by Averell Harriman in October 1942 and accused him of ingratitude and self-glorification; "You and Coward have gone out of your way to insult me and try to hold up the *Daily Express* to ridicule!"

Mountbatten pleaded that he had tried to persuade Coward to cut out this scene, but Beaverbrook would have none of it: "I shall never forgive you for this piece of disloyalty. From now on, you watch out. You will live to regret the day that you took part in such a vile attack on me!"

Philip Ziegler (Collins, £15).



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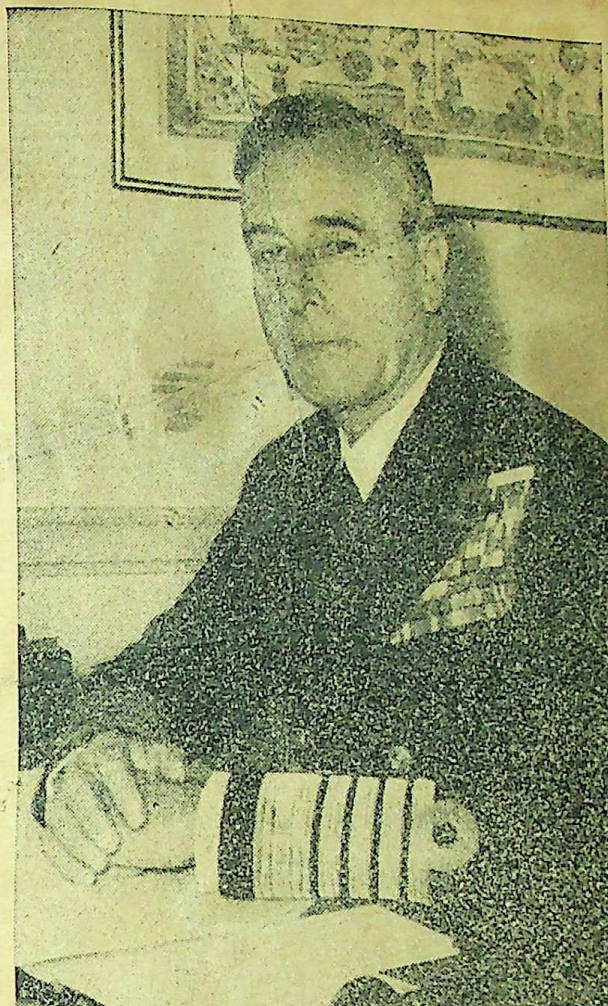
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"Legally speaking the Princes could have gone their own way if they had wanted to. When the British left India, the special relationship with the States, which had not been part of any greater India before, just lapsed. So it was up to the rulers to decide. Many of the relationships with the States had been negotiated long before British India was completely set up. I'm not very good in my history here but I think the relationship with Hyderabad, for instance, existed longer than the relationship which involved the British occupation of Madras. The point being that the British government had no right

to say to the Princes 'sorry boys, you belong to India now'".

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The biographical entry on Nehru in the dictionary goes on to say:

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Maulana Abul Kalam Abad remarked in his memoirs that it was a grave political blunder which eventually strengthened the Muslim League and encouraged it to demand a partition of the country.

It was again because of Nehru's opposition that the proposal for a coalition Government in Bengal between Congress and Fazlul Haque's Krishak Praja Party was turned down unceremoniously. The blunder of Congress was fully exploited by the Muslim League which immediately formed a coalition Government with the Krishak Praja Party.

It is significant to note that in order to exclude any Muslim political influence in UP Nehru deliberately threw away the two Muslim majority provinces—Bengal and the Punjab—into the arms of the Muslim League. It was from this time onwards that the communal forces in Bengal and the Punjab became more and more strengthened, ultimately leading to the demand for Pakistan in 1940.

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the cabinet mission plan as he feared that he could never trust Congress to give a fair deal to the Muslim League.

In the final phase of the constitutional negotiations after the arrival of Lord Mountbatten, Nehru all of a sudden turned a complete volte face for which no rational explanation could be found.

He had all along been opposed to the Muslim League and its Pakistan demand. From 1927 onwards it cannot be said that Nehru did all that was possible to accept the reality of the situation and try to conciliate Jinnah and his Muslim League.

He always laboured under the delusion that in the constitutional struggle there were only two parties—the British Government and Congress. He

was encouraged in this feeling when he was called upon by the Governor-General, Lord Wavell, to form an interim Government and to go ahead with preparations for a constituent assembly despite the fact that the Muslim League refused to join either.

Congress accepted office in the interim Government and Jinnah in reply gave the call for direct action on August 1936.

When the orgy of mob violence spread in different parts of the country, Nehru was completely unnerved. He was panicked into an immediate acceptance of the Pakistan demand. It is difficult to say with certainty why this change came over Nehru so suddenly and mysteriously the biographer adds.—UNI.

Marks

It says it was Nehru's move which ruined all chance of a settlement between Congress and the Muslim League and the preservation of India's political unity under the cabinet mission plan.

It says when the cabinet mission plan of preserving India's political unity and at the same time granting some concession to the Muslim League demand for Pakistan in the shape of grouping of provinces had been accepted by both the political parties, Nehru as the newly elected Congress president called a press conference and made a most injudicious statement.

The statement held out the threat that once the constituent assembly was convened Congress would be free to choose any particular part of the cabinet mission plan and reject any other part.

Even Azad commented on Nehru's press conference as "one of those unfortunate events which change the course of history".

The immediate effect was the refusal of Jinnah to accept



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It is significant to note that in order to exclude any Muslim political influence in UP, Nehru deliberately threw away the two Muslim majority provinces—Bengal and the Punjab—into the arms of the Muslim League. It was from this time onwards that the communal forces in Bengal and the Punjab became more and more strengthened, ultimately leading to the demand for Pakistan in 1940.

The dictionary condemns Nehru's role during the constitutional negotiations which preceded the transfer of power in 1947.

the cabinet mission plan as he feared that he could never trust Congress to give a fair deal to the Muslim League.

In the final phase of the constitutional negotiations after the arrival of Lord Mountbatten, Nehru all of a sudden turned a complete volte face for which no rational explanation could be found.

He had all along been opposed to the Muslim League and its Pakistan demand. From 1937 onwards it cannot be said that Nehru did all that was possible to accept the reality of the situation and try to conciliate Jinnah and his Muslim League.

He always laboured under the delusion that in the constitutional struggle there were only two parties—the British Government and Congress. He

was encouraged in this feeling when he was called upon by the Governor-General, Lord Wavell, to form an interim Government and to go ahead with preparations for a constituent assembly despite the fact that the Muslim League refused to join either.

Congress accepted office in the interim Government and Jinnah in reply gave the call for direct action on August 1936.

When the orgy of mob violence spread in different parts of the country, Nehru was completely unnerved. He was panicked into an immediate acceptance of the Pakistan demand. It is difficult to say with certainty why this change came over Nehru so suddenly and mysteriously the biographer adds.—UNI.

Marks

It says it was Nehru's move which ruined all chances of a settlement between Congress and the Muslim League and the preservation of India's political unity under the cabinet mission plan.

It says when the cabinet mission plan of preserving India's political unity and at the same time granting some concession to the Muslim League demand for Pakistan in the shape of grouping of provinces had been accepted by both the political parties, Nehru as the newly elected Congress president called a press conference and made a most injudicious statement.

The statement held out the threat that once the constituent assembly was convened Congress would be free to choose any particular part of the cabinet mission plan and reject any other part.

Even Azad commented on Nehru's press conference as "one of those unfortunate events which change the course of history".

The immediate effect was the refusal of Jinnah to accept





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# PUBLIC OPINION

## IAS Academy Shifted

Serial No.  
of  
Question

Marks

224

THE news about the shifting of the IAS Academy from Mussoorie to Jaipur in Rajasthan has not come as a surprise to me. In fact, the rumour about shifting provides a central place for the spread of its location at the very day of its location at the hill station. During my stay in the Academy of different services, Professor, news were din- into my ears every now and then about its moving to places like Mysore, Hyderabad, Chandigarh and even Faridabad. It was finally decided to shift the Academy to New Delhi. Plans were finalised the building started coming up. The advance party was to proceed when there was an agitation by the business community which got terribly upset because of its adverse effect on their economy. A Bombay Weekly also contributed its share by publishing several articles criticising the Government for housing this institution in huge and well-furnished buildings. Members from the hill region too were not silent spectators. The move to shift the Academy was finally dropped. The new building at New Delhi was given the Jawahar Lal Nehru University and some crores of Rupees were provided for remodelling and setting up of new structures for the Academy in the Charleville area in Mussoorie. This was done about ten years back. During this period considerable sum of money has been spent in acquiring new buildings, renovating them and also in new constructions.

THE Government of India has spent crores of Rupees in purchasing buildings in the neighbourhood of Charleville and setting up a complex which is ideally suited for a training institution only. It would not serve any useful purpose for some office of the Government of India or as a venue for periodical conferences and meetings. Further the shifting of the Academy from Mussoorie is bound to affect the economy of the place very badly which can not be compensated in any other way. The Academy constitutes at least a couple of thousands of permanent residents and their dependents who contribute in no small measure to the economy of this 'Queen of Hills'.

B. N. Puri Retd. Prof. Lucknow.

### HOUSING BOARD

THE U.P. Housing and Development Board, Lucknow accepts the cost of the houses from the concerned allottee either in one lump sum or on instalment basis periodically. Several of the allottees in such cases prefer to pay the entire amount towards the cost of the house in one instalment. In such cases, the board may like to allow some rebate by accepting lesser amount from the concerned allottee so as to give an inducement. By doing so it is natural that many more allottees will go in for payment in one instalment. In this way the board will have a readily available cash of sizeable amount for taking up promptly in other projects in hand and at the same time much of the avoidable pressure of work in its office will be reduced to considerable extent. The payments towards the cost of housing

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secretary in the ministry which was in the charge of all who was an old but warhorse. Shinwell held the portfolio and made use of the services of all who manfully and managed the precarious position. The supply position immediately was shifted to those who was chancellor of the exchequer. Four years of peace in Britain registered a decisive victory but the Government disrupted the economy by a heavy burden of expenditure on defence. The Government came under great pressure and had to be devalued. The pound was still in Switzerland and had to negotiate with the Germans. Cripps came to London for the inevitable decision.

Austin Chamberlain. Elections in 1950 saw the reduced majority for Labour. Gaitskell had, before, established good relations with Bevan and had great admiration for him. But the budget proved to be a hurdle. Bevan agreed that there had to be reduction in every ministry but could not apply it in his own. He was angry with Atlee who sidetracked him for the post of foreign secretary as well as that of the chancellor of the exchequer and wanted to resign in any case. Charges for dentures and eyeglasses gave him a cause. He resigned along with Wilson who even then was less trusted either by Bevan or by others.

These resignations did not cause a rift in the Labour Party and Bevan's bluff was called. But the party paid heavily as its

leader of the opposition was  
hotly contested. Here again  
Gaitskell defeated both Bevan  
and Morrison.

It could not be said that Gaiskell, though effective, was a great opposition leader. He tried hard to keep the party united, but made a blunder of dividing it on the question of clause number four of the constitution which committed the party to nationalisation. Gaiskell could and should have postponed the issue but he forced it.

Bevan was not all out for nationalisation, but he and his group found it convenient to embarrass Gaitskell. On nuclear weapons and H-Bomb in particular, Bevan was not unilateralist in the beginning but wanted to demonstrate an independent attitude. Gaitskell did not mince words, made a powerful speech in the party conference but was narrowly defeated. The Parliamentary Labour Party, however, was furious with the Bevanites and the trade unionists and support-

Strachey said, Gaitskell left the harvest unrecap. Parliament was adjourned for the first and only time for an opposition leader who had never been a Prime Minister.

No politician's loss was felt so intensely as when Gaitskell died. He would have proved far more successful as Prime Minister than as the leader of the opposition. It did not work to his advantage to have taken such a position on the opposition bench which he would not sustain on the treasury benches. Macmillan, therefore, observed that as a leader of the opposition, Gaitskell was acting as if he was the government, when in fact he was not. He could not, therefore, enjoy the irresponsibility of the opposition.

An intellectual by temperament and upbringing, Gaitskell knew that politics was a game for power. He admitted that the controversy between him and Bevan was ultimately for power. But he would not stoop to conquer. Though modest, he was stubborn and confident about his abilities. He fought with Bevan but knew his high qualities and admonished a lady M.P. not to speak in a derogatory manner of Bevan.

Gaitskell's faith in socialism did not make him stern and puri-



**A FAMILY MAN:** Reading to his children, 1950.

returned for convalescence, therefore, decided and Attlee rewarded the f Gaitskell by appointing Cripps's place.

In five years after his speech, Gaitskell got the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He was the youngest member of the House of Commons to get it after

credibility became doubtful and Attlee decided to appeal to the country for a fresh mandate which he lost.

In the opposition the Labour Party could not to be united or strong. It happened in fifties and is being repeated now. Besides, Attlee stepped down due to ill-health and the post of the

ed Gaitskell, who in the course of a year, brought around even the party with him.

It was a moment of triumph for him. He was the unchallenged leader and made conciliatory moves towards his opponents. His intervention in Parliament at the time of Suez crisis made working class chauvinists angry but he endeared himself to the party. After the Suez, Macmillan retrieved the Conservative position but his cabinet colleague got into a scandal which in turn boosted the Labour prospects. Bevan died of cancer and Gaitskell created the image of the labour as a united party.

He was then on the threshold of supreme power and was to be the tenant at 10 Downing Street. But a virus first disabled him and then proved fatal and thus deprived him of the fruits of his hard labour and unflinching devotion to the Labour cause. As

tanical. He loved music and would not miss a dance. He loved the company of women but was not a womaniser. He believed in the style of leadership which would raise the tone of public debate and respect for public men. Gaitskell was able to gather round him able men and attract the best in them and not

When he heard Bevan talking profoundly on religion he readily admitted that it was refreshing to find one's colleagues could talk about these subjects in this way. He was rather sad when he could not spare time to read Toynbee's six volume history as Strachey could.

Such a man could or could not have been a great Prime Minister but he could certainly have elevated politics. Gaitskell, as Roy Jenkins has said, was a great politician who was also an unusually agreeable man.



EXAMINATION, 197

Subject.....

PAPER No.....

An intellectual by temperament and upbringing, Gaitskell knew that politics was a tussle for power. Though modest, he was confident about his abilities.

by Govind Talwalkar

ATTLEE, Bevin, Morrison, Cripps, Bevan and Gaitskell comprised the leadership of the British Labour Party in the immediate post-war period and their biographies can be said to embody the history of the party from 1930 to 1960. Hugh Gaitskell was the youngest of the Labour leaders and had all the makings of a prime minister.

His biography by Philip M. Williams was first published in 1979 and now the Oxford University Press has issued a paperback edition. It is abridged but the author has used the original text with the minimum of rewording.

Williams is not all praise for his subject and is alive to the shortcomings as well as the political mistakes committed by him. It can legitimately be said that the biographer is as candid as Gaitskell himself and so the book stands out from the general run of the political biographies. He, also, is not out to defend Gaitskell at all costs and denigrate all those who differed with or were opposed to him. Williams is keen to narrate the biography of this great British leader of the opposition and not to carry on a factional fight on his behalf.

Gaitskell's father was in the Indian Civil Service and was serving in Burma. He wanted Hugh to follow in his footsteps. But the son had different ideas. During the Oxford days he came under the influence of G. D. H. Cole, R. H. Tawney and Dalton. But Gaitskell had an original mind and though under the influence of Cole, he, in turn, also influenced his master. Hence, Gaitskell's arguments prevailed

upon Cole to change his ideas about "guild socialism."

Like Attlee, Gaitskell came to socialism by way of teaching. After his first in economics, Gaitskell accepted the post of a teacher in Nottingham and while teaching the adult miners, became aware of their poverty. Though a graduate of the university, he had no difficulty in establishing rapport with the workers.

After a stint at Nottingham, he secured a reader's post in London University, the economics department of which had to compete with the London School of Economics. The general strike and the Great Depression brought home the glaring shortcomings of the prevailing system which turned Gaitskell into a convinced socialist.

Gaitskell, however, rejected the ends of communism as well as the means. Marxism had no long spell on him. On examination he found it to be false and intellectually crippling. He was for defence alliance with the Soviet Union against Germany but was not an apologist of the Stalinist regime and, in 1935, declared that politically communism was the same as fascism.

### Witness To Fascism

He was a witness to the tragedy of Austria in 1934-35 which saw the defeat of the socialists by the Nazis. He was then a Rockefeller scholar in Vienna for a year. In the February of 1934, the Nazis crushed the resistance of workers and killed 1,500. Gaitskell asked Cole to alert British public opinion to this ghastly affair. As in Germany, communists pitted themselves against the socialists in Austria and the Nazis could defeat both. Gaitskell's disillusionment with the Marxists was then complete.

His pre-war experience in Austria made him aware of the dangers of fascism and he could not subscribe to the pacifism of the Labour Party whose leadership at the moment was either ambivalent or ignorant of the rising menace of fascism. It thought that rearmament would strengthen the hands of the Tories. Cripps, whose analysis was incisive but whose judgement was most of the time, faulty, argued that of the two evils, imperialism and fascism, imperia-

# He would

lism was the more abhorrent and that a successful war against Hitler would strengthen British imperialism.

Gaitskell returned to London and plunged into active Labour politics in 1935. He was a conscientious teacher and was popular with the students, but he did not shun political activity. His

ministry by his efficient work and the courage of his convictions. When offered the post of minister, he heard Dalton say, "You are not a roomful of his staff interrupted to say, 'Hugh, you are not a civil servant like that'."



Hugh Gaitskell (left) with his undergraduate brother Arthur.

attempt to enter Parliament was frustrated but war offered him a new opportunity. Dalton was appointed minister of economic warfare and Gaitskell became his confidential adviser. He did the work of a chief of staff in the ministry.

It was in a way, a junior post but Gaitskell could influence the

have it." Gaitskell, afterwards, was promoted to a post in the Board of Trade where also he made his mark.

With the conclusion of war came the elections and Gaitskell was elected as a Labour candidate from South Leeds, though he could not actively campaign due to illness. He was appoint-



# Three Phases Of F

INDIA'S foreign policy since independence can be divided roughly into three phases, each lasting approximately seven years. The first phase (1947-54) was undoubtedly one of idealism and achievement. Idealism stemmed largely from the first flush of freedom; achievement was made possible by the fortuitous combination of Mr Nehru's unique and towering personality and the peculiar world situation caused by the raging Cold War.

The task that Mr Nehru set himself was twofold. First, he wanted India to help accelerate the decolonization of those parts of Asia and Africa (although Africa's march to freedom was at least a decade away) which continued to be under foreign rule. The Asian Conference on Indonesia that he convened in New Delhi did force the pace of the reluctant Dutch withdrawal. His second objective was promotion of peace in a world torn asunder into two large, monolithic and mutually antagonistic power blocs. His firm conviction that India and other newly independent countries should steer clear of the power blocs was rooted in the belief that this was good for the progress of these countries as well as for peace in the world. Not all his efforts at peacemaking were successful; the famous correspondence with Stalin and Truman turned out to a fiasco. But many of his achievements stand out, most notably the Indian contribution to peace in Korea and Indo-China.

It must be said right away, however, that the seeds of frustrations and failures which were to overtake Indian foreign policy much later were also sown during the period of purposeful achievement. Since India was able to play in international affairs a rôle out of all proportion to its intrinsic strength, the elementary fact that the weight of a country's foreign policy is directly proportional to its power was lost sight of. The applause that usually greeted Indian peace initiatives created the dangerous illusion that India's mission was to save the world rather than safeguard its own security and other interests.

What else can explain the lamentable pusillanimity with which the Chinese occupation of Tibet was not only accepted but encouraged, with the Indian ambassador in Peking bending backwards to convert "uncertainty" over Tibet into "certainty"? It is perhaps New Delhi could prevent the return of Tibet. But

1954  
Mr Nehru's and Mr Menon's utter inability to correlate foreign policy with the needs of national security. Nothing more need be said on this point which is only too obvious and too painful.

Beginning after the trauma of Chinese invasion, the third and present phase of foreign policy is, above all, a period of confusion. Not all the confused thought and action is the result of the debacle in the Himalayas seven years ago. On the contrary, national mood has changed considerably since then thanks to the reorganization and expansion of the armed forces on the one hand and the outcome

the charge against Mr Nehru's Government is not its inability to obstruct the Chinese march into Lhasa but its failure to see what it was. Had this been done, the country would not have been so pitifully unprepared when the Chinese struck in NEFA.

The trauma of the Chinese invasion of 1962 brought to a close the second phase of foreign policy which can be said to have started in 1954. This was a strange and self-contradictory phase in which illusion and reality were inextricably inter-mixed, but the hallmark of the period was, in Dr Radhakrishnan's words, credulity and negligence.

The one hard reality with which Indian foreign policy did come to grips in this period was the inflow of American arms into Pakistan, under the impetus of Mr. Dulles's "pactomania". The counter-measure Mr Nehru adopted was the establishment of friendly ties with the Soviet Union. The realization of the consequences of the U.S. military aid to Pakistan was facilitated by the fact that for obvious reasons the Indian polity was more sensitive to the dangers to its security from Pakistan than it was to dangers from any other quarter. The friend-

ship with the USSR became possible because of the coincidence of Indian and Soviet interests. It is noteworthy that earlier attempts by Mr Nehru to befriend the Kremlin had come to naught; Stalin was just not interested; and Vyshinsky had abused India and its Prime Minister as late as in 1953.

If speedy establishment of cordial relations with Russia was a commendable achievement, a lot happened in 1954 or

By Inder

soon afterwards which was not creditable at all. The India-China Treaty, sanctifying the Chinese seizure of Tibet, was signed in this year. Never since Munich had a more dismal or fatuous document been signed. And the irony is that the preliminary steps to build the Aksai-Chin road were being taken by the Chinese at the precise moment when New Delhi was gloating over the five principles (Panch Sheel) incorporated in the Tibet treaty's preamble.

Nonalignment was very much to the fore in this period, helped no doubt by the emergence of President Nasser in Egypt and President Tito's brisk atti-



Those were the days....

formidable impediment of Formosa, a detente between Washington and Peking can no longer be ruled out. In a neat adaptation of Lenin, Mr Nixon is busy building a road to Peking via Bucharest. The Soviet Union is no less anxious than the USA to maintain the maximum flexibility in its international relations and to keep all its options open.

The Indian plight is in sharp contrast to this. Many are the options which have become practically closed. Excessive dependence on the Soviet Union for arms aid and on the USA for food and economic aid has made the country vulnerable to

(Continued on Page II Col. 4)

Arthur.

afterwards, post in the ere also he

on of war and Gaitskill labour candi- eeds, though tely campaign was appoint-



and served him cold with her own hands. A Western film-maker, who un- knowingly was documenting the last record of her life, speaks with the greatest emotion when reminiscing about another wo- manly touch; how, with all the jostling concerns of a hassled campaign trail she told an aide to tell him where the washroom was.

As for the photographs that have filled newspaper pages this past fortnight, they have, as al- ways, said much more than all these thousands of words, but their message has been the same, for aren't the most poignant ones those that show her in yet another female role: that of "granny dadi"? Little Rahul in his rompers clutching her hand: Mrs Gandhi's undiluted delight in Varun; at the funeral, the lovely Priyanka watching in despair her grandmother consumed by the flames, and, when only the ashes remained, leaning her head on her father's back, bereft.

Even the circumstances of Mrs Gandhi's end underline her femi- nine-ness. The outrage at the as- sassination is not only expressed in "How could they do this to a Prime Minister?" but in "How could they do this to a woman?" The fact that she is the first wo- man ruler in modern history to have been gunned down may re- veal how much she took on of the role of the man, but her vulnera- bility, her helplessness, her hope- lessness in this situation are quintessentially the legacy of her sex. A man in such a face-to-face encounter, could, in theory, have grappled with his assassin, but a woman could only record the be- trayal that she felt, and ask her presumed protectors: "Yeh tum kya kar rahe ho?"

Is this, then, the same Indira Gandhi who during her Prime Mi- nistership was described as the only real man in a Cabinet of women? Is this the leader whose career milestones are those of war, nationalization, emergency and all the other sombre deci- sions that are equated with strength, power, ruthlessness; short, with masculinity.

In her lifetime, even when womanly traits were public they usually worked to her





# INDIRA GANDHI AND THE FEMININE MYSTIQUE

By Bachi J. Karkaria

Mrs Gandhi would have been 67 tomorrow. Did being a woman affect her strength and weaknesses? What difference did it make to India, or to Indian women?

**I**N life, when she stood before us, sari-clad and feminine, one thought of her only as Prime Minister. In death, when her physical presence has been reduced to a scatter of ashes, there is the growing consciousness of her as a woman. Perhaps this is due to the images thrust upon our collective consciousness by the unending, almost unrelenting, flow of media tribute.

In our homes, through the intimacy of the television screen, we see her in the vast auditorium of Vigyan Bhavan during NAM; she is very much a woman making no effort to hide her femininity even while she stands at the very centre of the male dominion of power. Over the mass medium of the radio, her voice rings out from the ramparts of the Red Fort on Independence Day, she is India who is India, Mother India. In the cold formality of the printed word, male journalists put away their chauvinism and cynicism and dwell upon her feminine graces with the indiscriminate enthusiasm of gushing contributors to women's magazines.

In coffee house conversation, an intellectual chooses to remember about his meeting with her is "that she made tea for us with her own hands". A hoary Congressman who has known it all chooses most to recall how he was touched by the fact that she knew his name.

Little was let on about her as a wife, few had any quarrel with the way she acquitted herself as a daughter, but neither can be said about her role as mother. As for her position as mother-in-law, did not the public revel for weeks in the voyeurism of the domestic squabbles of the first family, as Menaka Gandhi made both headlines and political capital out of her ouster from 1, Safdarjung Place, portraying herself as the wronged daughter-in-law, the helpless widow, cast into the cold with innocent infant in arms by the heartlessness of the archetypal "saas"?

Again in death, the harshness of past judgment is softened as one sees the composed Rajiv, who, despite the terrible shock and bereavement, wears the mantle thrust upon him with quiet firmness whether he is officiating over the funeral pyre, forming a Cabinet or quelling the riots. And even those who still believed that Menaka was more sinned against than sinning, have paused to reflect that there was also a warmer kind of "saas-bahu" relationship in the Gandhi household,

as they see in photographs and on TV, the other daughter-in-law at Shantivan, so forlorn, so forsaken.

With all these conflicting images of life and death, comes the question, what difference did it make to have — to be — a woman Prime Minister? What did it mean to the country at home and abroad, and, most important, what did it mean to Indian women?

In a man's world, women leaders still need to repress their femininity so much so that it is not only Mrs Gandhi who won the appellation of "the only real man in a Cabinet of women". It was said too of Golda Meir and of Sirimavo Bandaranaike; is said of Margaret Thatcher. Yet there is little question that, of this impressive quartet, it was Mrs Gandhi who least repressed it, proudly announcing as she accepted the Chairmanship of the non-aligned movement, that "in a world dominated by men, I am a woman".

There is equally a different perspective to all issues because of her sex and that much of her celebrated instinct is the trade-

mark of her gender. As relevant is the fact that much of her popular appeal, especially in the villages where it mattered most, sprang from their perception of her as *Muraji*; in their eyes, a sarkar that had traditionally been deemed *ma-baap*, was headed by a flesh-and-blood *ma*. Travelling abroad recently one discovered that the information the Western world had about India began and ended with *Mataji* Gandhi (thanks to Attenborough) and *Madam Gandhi* (thanks to herself). There is little doubt that it was her astuteness as a statesman and her charm as a woman that has elevated India in the eyes of the world. It is not an achievement to be dismissed as inconsequential. Again, it is not that a man cannot have astuteness or charm; it is just that in a woman it is much more noticeable — and that few male leaders could have displayed, to quite the same degree, Mrs Gandhi's ability to be so intensely appropriate to the occasion: the urbane, sophisticated, exquisitely groomed woman in the glittering salons of the world, the



pun arya nari at the rural rally. The country's image and Mrs Gandhi's own unquestionably benefited thanks to Mrs G. But what did she do for the country's women, enslaved by the prejudice of centuries, dismissed as second class citizens and second class human beings? Did she lift them out of the oppression that is their ancient legacy? Did women acquire a new dignity simply by the fact that the Prime Minister was a woman?

The growing crimes against women, the morass of their economic exploitation, their illiteracy, their poor health, all shriek out an avenging "No". And yet, a yes must form part of the answer, even when the eulogizing is over and objectivity is allowed to have its say. Mrs Gandhi's mastery in other areas never blunted criticism of the continued oppression of Indian women during her regime; neither should her martyrdom.

Of course it is simplistic for any one to believe that the mere fact of having a woman Prime Minister can solve all the problems of women. Even if Mrs Gandhi could have devoted all her 17 years in office exclusively to that cause, she would not have succeeded, for she was up against forces far older and stronger than the power that grows out of a ballot box. No Prime Minister can devote all his or her energies to improving the feminine condition, but did Mrs Gandhi devote any of it to that end?

Let us start with education from whence all advance must spring. An official publication itself admits that female illiteracy is as high as 67.5 per cent in the age group 15-18, one that Mrs Gandhi's policies should have made a dent upon. It also points out that, despite an increase in literacy since the beginning of this century, the number of illiterate women went up from 161.9 million in 1951 to 251.3 million in 1981. Besides, the Committee on the Status of Women discovered in 1974, when Mrs Gandhi had already been a decade in office, that despite her overwhelming presence, 16.8 per cent of respondents still felt that girls should be given any education at all. In this belief began to change for the wrong reason: the girls are being educated because this enhances their value in the marriage market and diminishes the demands on dowry.

Which brings us to the biggest social failure of Mrs Gandhi's regime. It was during her tenure and most of all in her own backyard, in Delhi and its environs, that dowry burnings took on their most sinister manifestation. Not only could Mrs Gandhi not stem the social forces that were hell-bent on proving that a woman's life was worth less than a television set, she could not even stir the official machinery into action. Dowry burnings continued their gruesome rise largely because the police refused to register cases.

The police were guilty not only of sins of omission. The law's protectors turned predators, sexually molesting women even in the precincts of the thana where these hapless creatures turned for help. Matters came to a point where there was one dowry death every 12 hours in Delhi, while in Karnataka a woman was molested once every 15 hours.

When history assesses the achievement of women during Mrs Gandhi's rule, it will find few Bachendri Pals, but, crying for justice will be the many Kamalas bought and sold in the marketplace of Dholpur, the Maya Tyagis stripped in public by policemen in Baghpat, the Mathuras sexually molested by constables near Bombay, the Elizabeth Ekkas driven to suicide by a similar humiliation in Ranchi, the hundreds of others who were set aflame by avaricious in-laws and died before they could name the guilty, the equally large number

who did name them, but whom no one cared to hear.

Mrs Gandhi was not only unable to check this malevolent force, she did not prove herself much better than the men in making political capital of these atrocities. The hue and cry her party raised over rape and loot at Narainpur in 1980 led to the overthrow of the Lok Dal Government in Uttar Pradesh, which might have been a just end were it not for the fact that a later inquiry revealed that there was little basis to the allegations.

Police stations were not the only official agencies that offered rape instead of redress. Conditions were little better in homes set up expressly for the protection of women. Witness the grim revelations at Agra, Bharatpur, Lucknow and again, Delhi itself. Inmates were subjected to serious physical and mental abuse, and in the capital's Nari Niketan, one woman attempted suicide, unable to bear the humiliation of being "loaned" out to VIPs.

Yet, despite such overwhelming evidence to the contrary, Mrs Gandhi did make a difference. The plea that there is no rise in crimes, merely in the awareness thereof, may be an excuse behind which the authorities have been hiding for the past decade, but it is not an entirely baseless defence. Organizations to help women in distress have grown side by side with the realization that women must have a say. This awareness, had its source, even if indirectly, in the presence of one woman who made herself heard loud and clear. The fact that the Prime Minister was a woman made it less easy for men in authority to ignore the voice of female protest, regardless of whether Mrs Gandhi interfered or not.

In Mrs Gandhi's lifetime women were quick to point out that redress for their causes came from a predominantly male judiciary rather than the female-headed executive. They were not wrong, but again, even if the action of the courts was not in deference to Mrs Gandhi's sex, it sprang from an awareness of women's rights, and that did have something to do with the fact.

There is a similar rebuttal of the accusation of justice delayed. Admittedly, there was unnecessary dithering over the Criminal

maintained aloof and immune to the global assertion of women's rights, even without a woman Prime Minister. But with her, the process was accelerated. Even at the grassroots where no one had heard of women's lib, the oppressed and their defenders expressed their problems only because they had another woman to appeal to.

This is equally true of other issues that touch the lives of women: family planning, programmes for mother and child health, improvement of female nutrition, efforts to bring down infant mortality. The latest Plan

in between, from Tarakhwarl Sinha to Ambika Son but they were threats, irrespective of sex; men were similarly scashed. But to the mass of women in the hurly-burly of politics, shows an inspiration.

To those who aspired to leadership in other professions — those that did not challenge her political supremacy — she was a role model. To the helpless widow seeking justice for her daughter she was simply another mother who would understand. To the sophisticated she was an example. And — as their adulation while she lived and



Law Amendment to deal with rape and dowry offences; the Dowry Act is still to be sufficiently effective; all legislation relating to women remained on the anvil for far too long; the Committee on the Status of Women pointed out in its report that the volume of justice remained per

document was the first to devote a chapter exclusively to women and their role in development.

There can be no denying that Mrs Gandhi made a difference. She may have put down any number of political women in her life, starting with her aunt and ending with her daughter, but

their hysterical grieving at her death proved — the vast multitude of rural women, even those oppressed and exploited despite being governed by the most powerful woman in the world, believed her to be the very incarnation of Bharat Mata. It has been said that she had no reason to live.

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NEW DELHI, JUNE 23--MR. SANJAY GANDHI DIED IN A PLANE CRASH IN THE CAPITAL EARLY THIS MORNING. THE CREMATION WILL TAKE PLACE AT 5 P.M. TOMORROW (TUESDAY).

**PARLIAMENT ADJOURNS**  
Both Houses of Parliament  
adjourned for the day after



## CC-0. Bhagayadhamma, National Research Institute, M-1



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CC-0. Bhadrayan Ramani, National Research Institute, M-1



# Parliament pays rich tributes

NEW DELHI, June —

A shocked and grief-stricken Parliament today paid a rich tribute to Mr. Sanjay Gandhi and adjourned without transacting any business for the day as a mark of respect to his memory.

Both the Houses met this leader of the Lok Sabha Mrs. Indira Gandhi, his mother, morning in a grave atmosphere and the shock was writ large on the faces of the members. Many were seen sobbing.

In the Lok Sabha, Speaker Bal Ram broke down several times as he made the short announcement and paid his tribute to Mr. Gandhi.

In the upper house, Chairman M. Hidayatullah said: "We are poorer, much poorer after his death".

All the leaders, who joined the Speaker in paying homage to Mr. Gandhi in the Lok Sabha expressed the hope that God would give the Prime Minister and Mrs. Maneka Gandhi the courage to bear this terrific loss.

Gloom had preceded the arrival of members into the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, and when they trooped in, sombre and silent, it was heightened.

In the Lok Sabha many aisles were as usual full with members or ministers except one, the one in which Sanjay Gandhi customarily sat, surrounded by his young, noisy supporters.

So too was empty the first seat in the House, that of the

leader of the Lok Sabha Mrs. Indira Gandhi, his mother, morning in a grave atmosphere and the shock was writ large on the faces of the members. Many were seen sobbing.

That seat today was vacant. "Today we have to console the Prime Minister".

Otherwise also was an unusual day for the House. Into session it went two minutes late. Many members and ministers were visibly moved.

Into a lump of deep anguish trailed some words of the announcement, on Sanjay Gandhi's death, formally made in the House, by the Speaker Mr. Bal Ram.

But before the Lok Sabha adjourned, tributes were paid to Sanjay Gandhi's memory

Continued on Page 5

## Top-level court of inquiry to be appointed

NEW DELHI, June 23—The Government has decided to appoint a top-level court of inquiry to investigate the causes of the Pitts aerobatical aircraft crash this morning.

Official sources said the court was likely to be headed by a former judge.

Under the Civil Aviation laws every air accident has to be investigated either by the Air Safety Directorate of the Directorate-General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) or a higher level court of inquiry appointed by the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism.—UNI

## Assembly session from July 3

LUCKNOW, June 23—The Uttar Pradesh Vidhan Sabha will now begin its opening session from July, 3 and not June 25.

A notification to this effect was issued by the Governor Mr. C.P.N. Singh this evening.

According to the revised programme, the new members of the House will be administered oath on June 27. Earlier, it was scheduled for tomorrow.

The Speaker's election is now to take place in the forenoon of the July 3 and the joint-session of the House will be addressed by the Governor in the afternoon.—UNI

## 'Big explosion'

NEW DELHI, June 23—"big explosion" was heard the aircraft carrying Mr. Sanjay Gandhi crashed early today Air Chief Marshal Arjun Sir said.

"I heard a big explosion shortly after everybody the aircraft has gone down," former Air Chief added, recorded eye-witness account for All-India Radio.



## A PROFILE IN COURAGE

NEW DELHI, June 23—A profile in courage was Mrs. Indira Gandhi amidst the death of her son.

From the moment of the news of the crash of the aircraft in which Sanjay Gandhi lost his life, to the minute his body was brought from the hospital to No. 1, Akbar Road, Mrs. Gandhi was a picture of fortitude.

Traces of red in her eyes was all that betrayed the emotion of a composed Mrs. Gandhi.

A grim-faced Mrs. Gandhi, her eyes red and swollen, visited the site of the air crash at 3-50 p.m. today.

Mrs. Gandhi emerged from her white Ambassador car and walked a few yards, jumped the rope cordon and told the experts inquiring into the crash, "Sanjay was wearing a wrist-watch and had a bunch of keys."

Mrs. Gandhi was told by the experts and senior police officers that both the wrist-watch and the bunch of keys had been deposited in the police station.

### IN TEARS

Mrs. Gandhi, who was wearing dark sun glasses, was in tears when she came to the site. She stayed there for a short time.

As she walked briskly and looked at the twisted metal remains of the aircraft, she paused for a moment and then turned her face away from the gruesome sight to talk to the officials.

Mrs. Gandhi was accompanied by her private secretary R. K. Dhawan.

Delhi Flying Club circled overhead probably making an aerial survey.

Hundreds of people braving the scorching sun were still covering on the crash site to have a look at the wreckage. But they were being stopped by policemen a short distance away.

Wrapped in the party tricolour Sanjay Gandhi's body was

## Cremation at Shanti Vana

NEW DELHI, June 28—Mr. Sanjay Gandhi will be cremated at Shanti Vana. Samadhi of his grandfather, Jawaharlal Nehru, tomorrow evening.

The funeral procession will leave the Prime Minister's house at 4 p.m.

Mrs. Gandhi visited the Shanti Vana this afternoon to finalise the cremation site.

Sanjay's elder brother Rajiv who is on a holiday in Italy is flying back tomorrow morning.

Mrs. Indira Gandhi spoke to him over the long-distance telephone at 10-30 a.m.—PTI.

## Special trains

NEW DELHI, June 23—The railways are running special trains to enable people to come to Delhi to attend the funeral of Mr. Sanjay Gandhi tomorrow.

The stations wherefrom the special trains will run include Varanasi, Rae Bareilly, Amethi, Lucknow, Chandigarh, Aizmer, Jaipur, Jhansi and Patna.—UNI

placed in an outer room of the Prime Minister's residence as thousands of his shocked admirers filed past to have the last glimpse of their leader.

In a marked contrast to a huge garlanded portrait, which adorned the wall, Sanjay Gandhi's face was full of bruises and stitches. His eyes were half-open and the forehead bandaged.

A sombre and composed Mrs. Gandhi, who sat on the floor, accepted the people's condolences without a visible display of emotions as priests recited religious hymns.

Mr. Dharendra Brahmachari, with his arms folded, stood by the side of the body in his usual white 'dhoti' as Mr. R. K. Dhawan, Mrs. Gandhi's Special Assistant, regulated the crowd.

Several broke down on entering the room and had to be escorted out by the security men, who faced a tough time controlling the milling crowd and the news cameramen.

Despite the noise outside, the atmosphere inside the room was serene. A strong smell of incense-sticks pervaded the room.

Mrs. Gandhi, holding her emotion in check, received a steady stream of distinguished visitors, who came to her residence to share her grief.

Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, visibly moved, conveyed his sorrow by putting his face on Mrs. Gandhi's head. She took him inside the house. Earlier Sheikh Abdullah, Chief

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## भारतीय स्टेट्स

in history has one so young made an  
on a country as big as India in so short a  
is five years . . . Perhaps he reminded many  
of the valorous heroes of the past with his  
age and daring. His warlike spirit and de-  
e were welcomed by many. His doings  
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was a brief candle that shed light and heat.

the face of death one  
philosophises, vainly trying  
discover a meaning in oc-  
currences that are beyond  
man comprehension. There  
re people who believe that  
here is an inscrutable connection  
between how a man lives and  
how he dies. To them the passing  
f Sanjay Gandhi fits into a  
cheme that is inspired by a divine  
ogic. For Sanjay died as he lived,  
a man of daring; and a turbulent  
career came to a turbulent end. A  
historian of the Mughal period has  
said of Humayun: "He tumbled  
through his life and tumbled out  
of it." Sanjay was as ill-starred as  
Humayun but he was a man of  
unsurpassed courage unlike the  
Mughal. Of him it can be said  
that he vaulted through his life  
and vaulted out of it.

Sanjay had the advantage of  
birth. To be born into the Nehru  
family meant a head start. It  
meant living with greatness, being  
part of a national institution. But  
it also meant constant exposure to  
the public gaze and running the  
risk of becoming an enlargement  
of oneself. It is doubtful if San-  
jay would have risen to a position  
of national importance so quickly  
had he not received the support of  
his mother and the affection that  
the people of India gave to mem-  
bers of the Nehru family. But, at  
the same time, it must be recogni-  
sed that even his bitterest oppo-  
nents did not fail to see in him the  
makings of a natural leader. You  
can carry a man on your should-  
ers but he will have to reach out  
his hands himself to grasp the op-  
portunities that come his way.

### He Was A Doer

Jawaharlal Nehru who was  
Chacha to all children in India  
was Nana to Sanjay and his elder  
brother Rajiv. We remember how  
Panditji played with the two  
youngsters like all grandfathers  
do in spite of the cares of office.  
But we do not know the stories  
that he told them, whether he  
spoke to them of the Himalayas  
and the Ganga, of the mountains  
and the rivers that he loved, and  
of Asoka, Harsha, Akbar and Cy-  
rus the Great. We do not know  
whether Nehru who was a modern  
acharya to a whole nation had the  
time to be teacher to his grand-  
children. Sanjay himself was, in  
later years, reluctant to answer  
questions regarding how his life  
had been influenced by his grand-  
father.

Sanjay had no academic pre-  
tensions. It is remarkable that in a  
country that so greatly values for-  
mal education he was acceptable  
without a distinguished scholastic  
record to his credit. Quite early in  
his life he proved himself a doer  
rather than a thinker. He was fas-  
cinated by things rather than by  
ideas and he tinkered with machi-  
nes instead of being curious to  
know what those big tomes in the  
Nehru library were about. It was  
unusual for children of upper  
class families (especially with a  
Brahmin background) wanting to  
make use of their hands.

Like youngsters in all well-to-do  
families he had toy cars to play  
with. But when he grew up, real  
cars became a passion with him.  
He wanted to make an automobile  
of his own and enrolled himself  
as a trainee with the famous Rolls  
Royce company of Britain. His

that was not wedded to any philo-  
sophy and indeed it was not suffi-  
ciently articulate to spell out its  
ideas. There were misgivings about  
such a leadership. For nearly a  
hundred years Indian public life  
had been dominated by lawyers.  
Men steeped in the liberalism of  
the West, men who could quote  
Mill, Bentham and Burke shaped  
the outlook of the people. They  
would rather lose a kingdom than  
an argument and they relished  
nothing better than theorising and  
legal quibbling. Sanjay did not fit  
into this mental framework. He  
showed himself intolerant of intel-  
lectual exercises that led nowhere  
and he was impatient for results.

### Ignored Intellectuals

People brought up in the gentler  
traditions of earlier decades were  
appalled by the way Sanjay dis-  
regarded old norms, by his readi-  
ness not only to strike but to  
wound. He brushed aside criticism  
of the politically tradition-bound  
and ignored the arm-chair intel-  
lectuals who scorned his indiffer-  
ence to ideology. Comparisons  
were inevitably drawn between  
him and his grandfather. He shad-  
red with Panditji his impetuosity,  
his dauntlessness of spirit and his  
readiness to defy death. But he  
was not like his grandfather a  
dreamer, a visionary, a man of  
thought. He had nothing of the ro-  
manticism of Nehru, nothing of  
his inward, meditative nature.

Sanjay took after his mother  
who does not have the vagueness  
of her father and who, in times of  
crisis, can draw upon resources not  
suspected of her before. He pos-  
sessed the toughness and steeliness  
of character that Indira Gandhi  
displayed in adversity, in times of  
conflict. Above all, he represented  
the boundless energy of youth  
that did not tolerate barriers in its  
path. This energy had a harshness  
to which our people had not been  
accustomed. During the emergency  
we had a demonstration of this  
aggressive spirit, the impulse to  
change the face of an ancient na-  
tion in the span of a few months.

It is difficult to answer the ques-  
tion how Sanjay Gandhi develop-  
ed qualities of leadership that re-  
presented a break with the norms  
of Indian political life. It is likely  
that he observed the cupidity, the  
dishonesty and the cowardice of  
the politicians who orbited around  
his grandfather and later around  
his mother. He must have formed  
a poor opinion of them not only  
for their hypocrisy but for their  
inability to act and to deliver the  
goods. He must have been disillusioned by the scramble for power,  
the endless talk and the futile de-  
bates.

### In A Hurry

Sanjay must have decided that  
India needed a holiday from this  
kind of politics and he was prepa-  
red to employ strongarm tactics  
where gentleness and persuasion  
had failed before. He, however,  
failed to take into account the  
psychology of the Indian people.  
He was in a tearing hurry to do  
and undo, to make and unmake  
history. The result was the "ex-  
cesses" of the emergency. If San-  
jay learned the lesson of the  
emergency when his mother and  
her supporters were dislodged  
from power in 1977, it is equally  
true to say that the emergency

subsequent efforts to make a small  
car called Maruti and the contro-  
versy it generated did damage to  
his image as a son of the Prime  
Minister. The point to note, how-  
ever, is that Sanjay wanted pri-  
marily to be an entrepreneur. It  
was fortuitously that he was drawn  
into politics and once he was in  
it there was no stopping him.

It was on the eve of the emer-  
gency that Sanjay Gandhi was  
catapulted on to the national  
scene and for five years until his  
death he remained the most con-  
troversial figure in Indian politics.  
The five years were years of tur-  
bulence, of drama, of passion, of  
hate, of the clash of fierce loy-  
alties. They were years during  
which India passed from one crisis  
to another, during which its politi-  
cal system was put to the severest  
test since Independence. For San-  
jay personally it was a period of  
triumph and failure and triumph  
again.

### Critics and Admirers

He was extolled as the would-  
be saviour of India, one who had  
arisen at the propitious time to re-  
unite the warring sections of Bha-  
ratavarsha and to bring order out  
of chaos. He was at the same time  
maligned and pilloried as a usur-  
per who arrogated to himself the  
powers that were not rightfully his  
and the charge was made that he  
was digging the grave of Indian  
democracy. A section of the intel-  
ligentsia could not make up its  
mind and remained ambivalent: it  
liked to nurse the democratic tra-  
ditions to which it had been ac-  
customed and, at the same time,  
it secretly hoped that Sanjay would  
build a strong India having re-  
course to methods not necessarily  
democratic.

The critics and the admirers  
were agreed on one thing: that  
Sanjay represented a new kind of  
leadership. It was a leadership

con" a lesson for the com-  
mon populace who during the in-  
terregnum between Indira's fall  
and rise again in January this  
year became tired of the endless  
squabbles between the various  
Janata factions.

How does one explain the San-  
jay phenomenon? How did San-  
jay Gandhi come to be recogni-  
sed in such a short time as a possi-  
ble successor to Indira Gandhi?  
Were even those originally oppo-  
sed to him beginning to feel that  
there was no alternative to him?  
Or were vast sections of our peo-  
ple subconsciously identifying him  
as a yuvaraja presaging a golden  
age that was not too distant?

Sanjay was an extraordinarily  
handsome man, bubbling over  
with youthfulness and he came of  
noble lineage. (He could be re-  
garded as a "pure" Aryan, his  
Kashmiri mother being Indo-  
Aryan and his Zoroastrian father  
being Indo-Iranian in origin.) In  
India, high birth, good looks and  
youthfulness are the traditional  
qualifications for a hero, and  
Sanjay stood apart from the com-  
monality of people as a prince. He  
did not conform to the dhrod-  
dhata image of classical drama,  
but he reminded many of us of  
the valorous heroes of the past  
with his courage and daring. His  
warlike spirit and defiance were  
welcomed by many.

Rarely in history has one so  
young as Sanjay made an impact  
on a country as big as India in  
as short a span as five years. His  
doings during this period had the  
effect of an electric shock admini-  
stered to the body politic of  
India. He was a brief candle that  
shed light and heat. He had two  
faces, one harsh, the other benign.  
Many watched his rise to power  
with dismay and many adored him  
as the man who would make the  
India of their dreams real.

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Five-year-old Sanjay embracing grandfather Nehru.



JITENDRA ARYA

With his parents in Pabalgam, Kashmir.



In Punjab.



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National Research Institute, Melkote Collection

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# Tower Of Strength

By G. S. KHOSLA

N I first met Indira Gandhi almost 30 years ago. She appeared to be a shy young woman. We appeared to be members of the committee set up by the Government of Delhi, to help organize cultural tableaux for the Republic Day pageant. I attended the meeting that saw Jawaharlal Nehru's idea of the military parade should be followed by tableaux which would reflect the cultures of the different regions of India. The Government was entrusted to organize the Capital for the first time. The State Government stepped in later. I had written and produced several Punjabi plays in Delhi. Some of us had brought a pioneering zeal for the theatre from Lahore to the Capital. I had acquired some reputation as a writer-director. I had also been elected president of

the Punjabi Theatre. I first tried to promote a Punjabi stage in Delhi.

There were 15-odd members among whom sat Indira Gandhi like a minister without portfolio, as no particular role had been assigned to her while the others like myself, were there as cultural representatives of different regions of India. One by one, we unfolded our plans for the tableaux and how we proposed to execute them. I don't remember Indira Gandhi having made any comment. Jawaharlal Nehru had somewhere described his daughter as a slip of a girl. Today, I could say with hindsight that she was just growing out of that stage and the impression she left on me was that of a shy taciturn woman of great charm.

This chance acquaintance with Indira Gandhi was the forerunner of a meeting at Trimurti House. It had not yet been christened Trimurti Bhavan in 1952. I got a phone call from the Prime Minister's staff that Indira ji wished to see me and asking

whether I could make it convenient to meet her. I could not but accept a call from the Prime Minister's daughter, whose reticence had charmed me a few months earlier.

So I went to the P.M.'s residence in an expectant mood. An aide escorted me to the wide verandah on the first floor, facing the imposing gateway. As I surveyed the morning light playing on the tree tops of the garden, I saw a shimmering

presence walked in and took the chair opposite me. She broached the subject of the Bharat Sewak Samaj and said that she was looking for somebody who could present its message of service to the people in the form of a play.

With a promising career ahead of me with the Indian Railways, I was not looking for an opening that would involve me in public affairs. Writing and directing plays had been only a pastime with me. I explained to her that as a government servant it would not be proper for me to participate in the activities of an organization with political overtones. But that was only a part of the reason for my refusal, as the other and the unsaid part was that I could not bend my creative abilities to what could have been interpreted as a venture for personal advancement. I could have used that contact

through the verandah of his home. After the chat, Indira Gandhi saw me off to the top of the staircase and we bade goodbye. I did find her warm and extremely amiable, but not a strong presence. Her voice quivered at times and she fumbled for words. I did not see in her a future prime minister.

It was some years later, perhaps in 1964, when my third encounter with Mrs Gandhi took place. My wife, Manorama, and I were invited to a private tea party at Rashtrapati Bhawan by a senior member of the President's staff. When after an hour's stay we wanted to take leave of our host, he suggested that we might hang on a bit more as an important guest was yet to arrive. That guest was Mrs Gandhi, Minister for Infor-

rent as I was born and bred among politics".

Then she left hurriedly, excusing herself as she had to attend a wedding reception for a son or daughter of a joint secretary in her ministry. Her parting words were: "Mujhe wahan zaruri jaana hai, nahin to wo mujhe kachcha kha jayega". (I must go there, otherwise he will eat me alive). We had already been to that reception, which was for 5 p.m., before coming to Rashtrapati Bhawan. So thinking that she would be two hours late, I said to myself, "What sang froid!"

In 1970, Indira Gandhi, as Prime Minister, formally inaugurated the Tarapore atomic station. We were present at the ceremony. She spoke from a written text and delivered her lines in a firm tone, pronouncing each word immaculately, and pausing at the right moments for

applause, right from the opening words, "Governor, Chief Minister, Excellencies..." to the final "Jai Hind".

After she had pressed the button to put the plant on stream, Vikram Sarabhai, Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission and the chief host, led her towards the tea enclosure, under a colourful shawlana, where the guests awaited her. After a casual glance at the hundred odd flower beds and tables, laid with food specially brought from Bombay, she waved to the entire set up with the words, "Aap in VIPs ko chahiye, main in logon se milti hun". You entertain these VIPs to tea and I shall meet those people).

She sprightly made her way to the crowd of villagers who had waited I do not know for how long behind a thick rope stretched across the lawn, hoping to have a glimpse of the woman well known to them through her photograph on posters. On see-

ing her in flesh and blood, they almost rubbed their eyes in wonderment and expressed their joy and admiration with broad smiles. I was too far to be able to hear the words exchanged between her and her admirers, but her way of handling a non-descript crowd of simple country folk put them completely at ease, as if they had always known her. Indira Gandhi had obviously learnt from her father how to reach the heart of the people. Her manner was sure, free and easy, without a trace of the

mation and Broadcasting in Lal Bahadur Shastri's cabinet.

By the time she trooped in, all the other guests had left. So, after the formal introductions, we had an opportunity to make conversation with her. Somehow it turned to public affairs and Manorama put her one or two questions, from which Indira Gandhi possibly formed the impression that my wife was interested in entering politics. Her advice was, "Politics is not meant for women from good families. But my case is diffe-





# THE DAWN OF INDEPENDENCE!

Continued from page (1)  
 approval of his choice. He spoke at length about C. R.'s virtues, especially his quality as a window on foreign lands and the profound impression he had made on foreign dignitaries and ambassadors. However, one backbencher after another denounced C. R. for resigning from the party when the Quit India movement was launched by Gandhi in 1942 and for giving the demand for Pakistan respectability by his "sporting offer" to Jinnah. In vain did Nehru plead for C. R. Finally, to save the leader's face, the party left the decision to Nehru and Patel in the light of the feelings expressed at the meeting. The party's will prevailed and, much to Nehru's annoyance, Prasad was elected President.

Devadas had the particularly delicate task of maintaining a balance between his pro-Nehru father-in-law and pro-Patel proprietors, the Birlas. But the fact that we exchanged notes enabled us to steer clear of the political shoals. The situation changed when Nehru failed to get C. R. elected President and, about this time, I found C. R. rather critical of Government in private conversation. The rift at the top was widening and a delicate question that arose was how our paper should serve the national cause by exposing the happenings behind the scenes without damaging the cause we stood for, namely Congress policies and programmes.

I offered to write a weekly column in the *Hindustan Times* on the understanding that it would be published under my pen-name Insaif and that I would have the columnist's freedom to write what I felt without inhibitions imposed by our editorial policy. My idea, I added, was to apply the Gandhian yardstick to the Government's acts of omission or commission. I added that to dissent and to debunk was the key role of a columnist in a democracy. So was my Political Diary born. (Some years later the brilliant correspondent of the *New York Times* in New Delhi, Abe Rosenthal, wrote me a letter saying that if I would produce the column twice weekly it would greatly help foreign correspondents in analysing and interpreting India.)

Hardly had the Diary appeared for a few weeks than Azad sent me word that he would like me to meet him. Azad came

straight to the point, Nehru and he felt that the Diary was "inspired by Patel and Birla." I asked him whether he or Nehru really felt that way. He replied: "You know the woman who has been carrying tales to Nehru." I told Azad that Nehru was not usually accessible to newsmen and gave time more readily to foreign correspondents than to Indian. As a rule, I checked all the information I gathered about Nehru with Kidwai, whom I met frequently, and also with the P.M.'s top civilian aides, who were my personal friends. Anyway, I suggested that Nehru or he should give me a weekly appointment and that I would check facts directly with him before writing my column. Azad welcomed my suggestion and I added that I found my normal practice more rewarding, namely seeking an interview with the Prime Minister periodically and making momentary contacts in the lobby to get his reactions on matters of topical interest. I had found Nehru very courteous and stimulating on such occasions.

A day later Azad sent for me and said he had talked with Nehru and that they had agreed that I should meet Azad every Sunday. I expressed happiness at this decision because I had had a close understanding with Azad since 1924, when he presided over a special Congress session in Delhi. Thus the Sunday morning meeting over coffee became a habit and one that proved most stimulating and rewarding. We would discuss politics and personalities without inhibition. Azad would tell me in confidence all that happened in the Cabinet and the Working Committee meetings and I would keep him up to date on happenings elsewhere at home and abroad. The last of these meetings took place four days before his death.

The conflict between the Nehruites and the Patelites came to a head in August 1950 when Kidwai secured Nehru's support for his proposal to put up Kripalani for the Congress presidency as against Tandon for the party's annual session at Nasik. Within a fortnight of this decision, Kidwai arranged the publication of a letter declaring that Nehru would refuse to serve on the Working Committee if Tandon was elected. Patel backed Tandon and Kripalani was defeated in the most exciting contest since Subhas Bose clashed with Gandhi. Tandon retaliated by refusing to appoint Kidwai to the Working Committee. Kidwai, in turn, organised a Democratic Front which came to be known as the "KK" (Kidwai-Kripalani) Group. Tandon considered the creation of a group within the

party to be wrong. But he found it difficult to take disciplinary action against the Front because of Nehru's sympathy for the policies it stood for. This development, marked the beginning of splinter groups in the ruling party.

A crisis was caused by Nehru's resignation of the membership of the Congress Working Committee formed by Tandon. The Kidwai group had made Nehru resign from the Committee by telling him that the "reactionaries" in the party would use him to win the elections and then throw him overboard. Tandon told me he did not want the Congress to split on a personal issue at a time when so much needed to be done. He would not cross swords with Nehru but would make way for him by resigning his office of Congress President. Tandon knew he had the full backing of Patel. His decision to step down was, therefore, not only graceful but highly patriotic.

The man who emerged quietly to a place of prominence out of the drama of Nehru-Tandon differences was the Police Minister in U.P., Lal Bahadur Shastri. He was a trusted lieutenant of Tandon and he figured behind the scenes in avoiding an open clash between them. Nehru sensed in Shastri the qualities of an unostentatious and solid worker with a genius for compromise. Before long Nehru drafted Shastri to the Centre particularly to help him in organising the party of its first battle of the hustings in the general election of 1952.

Not long afterwards, the situation across the northern border took a turn for the worse, resulting in what was perhaps the last clash between Patel and Nehru in the Cabinet. Red China invaded Tibet and Nepal was in the grip of internal turmoil. It was well known that Patel and Nehru differed from Nehru on Tibet. They had urged him to ensure that Tibet continued an independent buffer between China and India. Now their had proved correct. Nehru, upset because Peking had garded his counsel, Patel, heart ailment had become marked, declared emphatically that India's relations with should be readjusted. As me that though his head in the Sardar, he had had Nehru.

Delhi's trouble across der stemmed mainly from alayan blunder committed Government in describing position vis-a-vis Tibet communication with Communist Government had recognised China.

stature of Patel. Tributes to the Iron Man came from far and near. Pakistan's Prime Minister, Liaquat Ali, succinctly stated: "Sardar Patel always said what he meant and meant it." All were agreed on one thing: While Gandhi was the architect of India's freedom, Sardar was the architect of India's unity.

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# INDIA SINCE CURZON

## THE RISE OF COMMUNALISM

MY EYES were opened to forming it was to elevate so- the rich Nankana Sahib Gur- the realities of Indian dually the backward villagers dwara at the birthplace of politics by my countrywide through education and better Guru Nanak, the founder of tour with the Lee Commission medical attention and show- the faith, they met with fier- resistance from Pathan guards: the and study of the massive ing them preference in filling posts in the administration in employed by its mahant and East volume of evidence submitted order to give them their share were thrown back with theong- of individuals and deputations. of employment. But since the loss of 130 lives. 1920, Although Congress and Le- chief beneficiaries of these nal- gues sessions and the de- policies were Muslims, every new- bates in the Central Legis- measure he took and every the Akalis of the Gandhian the- ture had made me wise to appointment he made assum- technique of satyagraha (pas- rad- the political and constitutional ed a communal tinge. sive resistance). The de- The aspects of Indian politics, the spent six months of the year mon- strations that followed at- Gur- Guru Ka Bagh led to hundreds of overriding importance of the in Simla and I got several op- of non-violent Akalis being- services in that context was portunities of questioning injured in baton charges by- now apparent. Indeed, the Mian Sahib, as Fazli was the police. Gandhi acclaimed the movement as demonstrat- the tour revealed that employ- generally called in conversa- ing his thesis that civil dis- ment under the Government tion by his Indian friends, on obedience was a weapon for the person's or community's or his policies and actions, which the brave and not for the had caste's degree of advance and were frequently the subject of bitter controversy in the provincial Press. Patiently and in soft tones, he explained that his family had been converted to Islam from Hindu- ism several generations ear- lier, and yet it was so much under the influence of Hindu culture and traditions that when he was due to marry a pundit was called in to examine his horoscope and fix the auspicious hour. He was married both according to the Muslim law by a qazi (priest) and according to Hindu rites. cowardly. who aites along rity. could who had blessed the satyagraha. a He himself had put through a Gurdwara Act providing legal remedies and fair compensation, but it had been rejected by the Akalis. zli's as the Akali revolt, Sir Malcolm Hailey, Governor of the Punjab, felt, was undermining the morale of the Sikhs in the armed forces. The danger signals could not be ignored, after the titled Sikh Deputy 31st President of the provincial e to Legislative Council had re-ber signed in protest and given As- among themselves. Neverthe- less, the movement had suc- ceeded in giving the Sikhs the kind of political identity that was to obstruct efforts for a communal settlement in the Punjab in the years to come. On the eve of the second general election under the Montford reforms, Fazli, in

This process began with Mian Fazli Husain's resignation from the Congress in 1920 and his zeal to work the Montford reforms in a constructive spirit. He and other Punjab Congressmen had frustrated O'Dwyer's move not to introduce the reforms in this province on the plea that it did not have a legislative council and even the experience of working the Minto-Morley reforms. The Punjab was kept politically backward and administered ruthlessly by British officials. O'Dwyer had even refused to recommend Fazli, then leader of the Lahore Bar, for appointment as a judge of the Chief Court because of his political views.

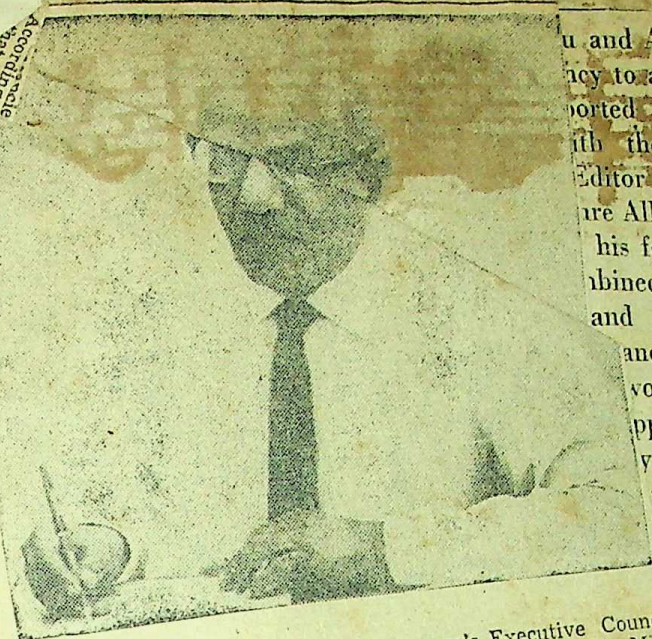
### Sikh upsurge

Fazli recalled that he set up the first district Congress Committee in the Punjab early in 1917 and presided over the first provincial (Congress) conference the following October. Harkishan Lal was chairman of the reception committee, and the conference endorsed the scheme of legislative reforms jointly sponsored by the Congress and the League. Fazli assured me he sincerely believed in the unity of the Hindus and the Muslims, but he did not consider he would be honest in saying that he was an Indian first and a Muslim next. He was an Indian and a Muslim at the same time. He would champion separate electorates









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## CURZON AND NEHRU

IN the process of growing up Government's autonomy in  
as a journalist, I was to the face of the Mughal the  
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Curzon as Under-Secretary  
for India

of Empire. In a real sense,  
nevertheless, Curzon was then has often been des-  
midwife of India's emergence an arrogant impe-  
on the world scene. What ut he was an intel-  
Curzon set in motion was, de- nd worked steadfast-  
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tion at the hands of Jawahar- greatest partner in  
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# GANDHI AND NEHRU

IN a historic speech in 1942 Gandhi declared long before Indian freedom seemed imminent, that Jawaharlal would be his successor. The occasion for the statement was a story of report-differences between him and Nehru on India's attitude to the war.

Dismissing the report as of little account, Gandhi said: "Nobody has suggested that Jawaharlal and I are estranged. It will require much more than differences of opinion to estrange us. We have had differences from the moment we became co-workers, and yet I have said for some years and yet now that not Rajaji but Jawaharlal will be my successor. He says that he does not understand my language, and that he speaks a language foreign to me. This may or may not be true. But language is no bar to a union of hearts. And I know this, that when I am gone he will speak my language."

In so far as Nehru inherited in the post-independence period all the halo and the charisma that Gandhi had enjoyed before the advent of freedom, the Mahatma's prophetic insight has been vindicated. In nominating Nehru as his successor, from among the many leaders that surrounded him and some of whom, like Rajaji, were closer to him in spirit and thought than Jawaharlal, Gandhi revealed his unerring political intuition.

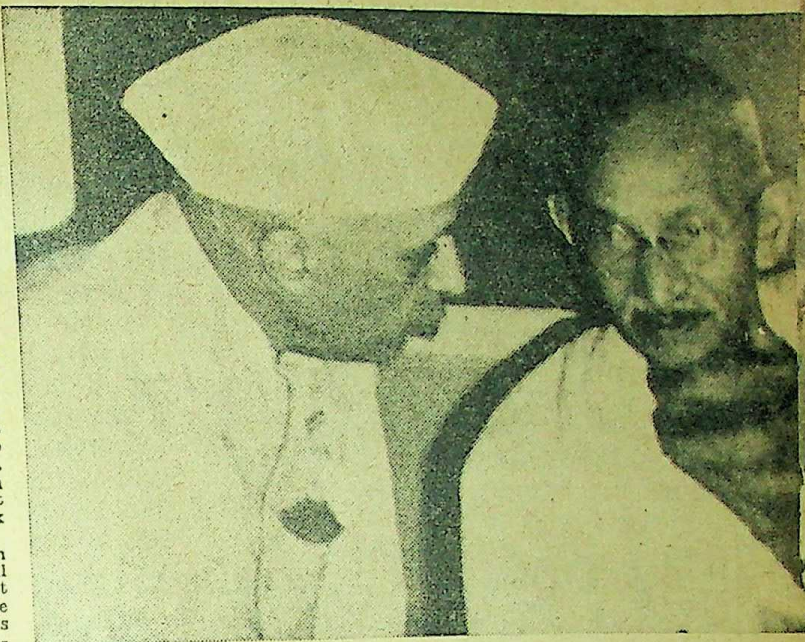
He could see long before 1967 the shape of things to come. He saw the drift within the Congress and outside. He was concerned about the growing appeal of communism and socialism to the younger generation. And he instinctively realised that if anyone among his followers was likely to keep the Congress together in the years ahead and save the country from a disastrous political cleavage it would be Jawaharlal.

## Modern science

Gandhi was well aware of the differences in approach and philosophy between himself and Nehru. But he also knew that Jawaharlal was a disciplined soldier of the freedom struggle. By and large, Jawaharlal sought to achieve a consensus on controversial issues, even as Gandhi had done. He inspired both confidence and respect in his colleagues. He commanded a wider international reputation than any other political leader in the country. Gandhi must have felt that at least in the early years of freedom India would need the unquestioned leadership of one who was acceptable to the masses within the country and who was known and respected abroad. Jawaharlal alone filled the bill.

History has amply justified Gandhi's choice. There can be no argument that no one else in the years since 1947 could have filled so successfully the position that Nehru held in the country as Prime Minister, political leader and the authentic voice of the nation in international affairs.

It is needless here to recall Nehru's many-sided achievements in the seventeen years he was Prime Minister of the country. His dedication to democracy was so profound that when confronted with a choice between freedom and restraint, he invariably was on the side of freedom. He strove ceaselessly to promote the secular approach as the solvent of the communal conflicts that had led to the bitter tragedy of partition. A fervent believer in the power of modern science and technology to relieve the drudgery and over-



Exchanging ideas at the A.-I.C.C. session in 1946.

## ... need for synthesis of their ideas

by V. K. Narasimhan

Although Gandhi's economic philosophy differed radically from that of Nehru, both wanted to civilise or spiritualise politics.

The author asserts in this article that only by attempting a synthesis of their ideologies can India make a unique contribution to the building up of a progressive, democratic and just society.

India's present plight, the writer adds, is due to Nehru's failure to apply Gandhian ideas to the solution of the country's problems.

came the poverty of the masses, he devoted his energies to the promotion of scientific institutions and the modernisation of the economy.

He made planning a part of the Indian way of life and as an essential requisite for orderly and quick progress. Above all, he made India a respected and valued member of the international community and till the Chinese attack in 1962, a power to reckon with in world councils.

His greatest contribution to international politics was the concept of peaceful co-existence among countries with divergent internal social systems. In a world divided by the "cold war" with its ideolo-

ed only if they themselves led a simple life.

4. He regarded any money received from the public as a sacred trust to be spent for the maximum benefit of the people. If his ideas had had a dominant influence on the administration, there would have been the most rigorous economy in public expenditure and there would have been very little of that inflation which has become a curse on the country.

Gandhi's personal philosophy was primarily based on Hindu ideals of dharma and morality. His practice of non-hatred was a dynamic doctrine in which there was no compromise with evil or injustice. In the resistance to wrong as he saw it, he was always prepared to make the supreme sacrifice rather than surrender to the wrongdoer. He believed that faith in the power of the spirit was essential for sustaining moral courage to the bitter end. And he felt that the power of the spirit could be cultivated only by a rigorous personal discipline in which renunciation and non-attachment to material things were essential elements.

In his economic philosophy as well as in his philosophy of life, Nehru differed greatly from Gandhi.

## Humanist

In his economic philosophy, he shared the modern socialist's outlook, though he was not attached to any particular brand of socialism. The essence of his socialism, to which he brought primarily a pragmatic approach, was that the condition of the masses could be improved only by the application of science and technology to the productive processes in industry and agriculture and that the objective of the State in promoting economic development on a socialist basis should be the improvement of the living conditions of the masses and not addition of

able to fiscal and planning policies which took no note of basic economic considerations and to the expenditure of public money largely unrelated to results. Inflation has been built into the structure of Indian planning and the pattern of public expenditure. All the evils of corruption and the mass frustration and discontent we witness today are the direct by-products of inflation.

Was there any scope, having regard to the differences between Gandhi's and Nehru's economic personal philosophies, for some kind of synthesis which would have given the country the benefits of the Gandhian legacy and the dynamics of Nehru's modernism?

My answer is that there was and there is need for such a synthesis. I believe that it is in working out this synthesis that India will make its unique contribution to the building up of a progressive, democratic and just society which respects simultaneously the human personality and moral values. In this synthesis, what matters is not so much the details of the programme which Gandhi advocated but the spirit in which the administration, the wielders of power, political or economic, and the entire people function.

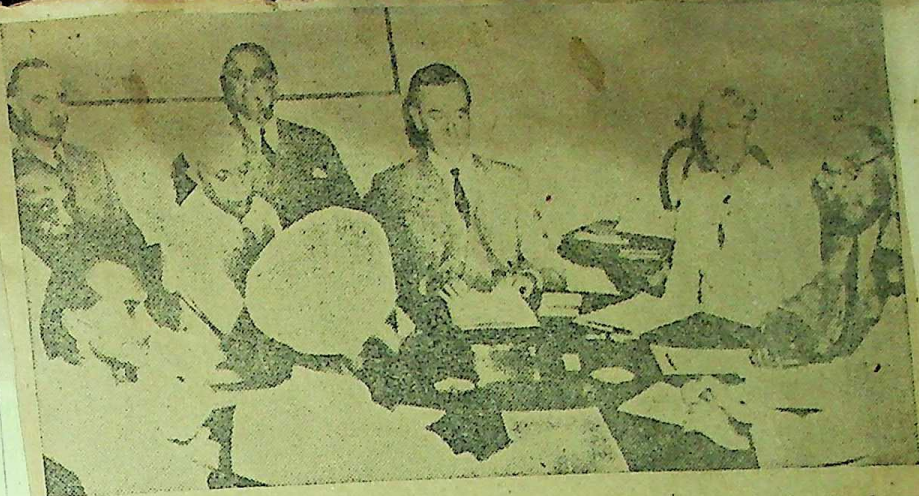
For instance, most socialists are inclined to pool-pool Gandhi's conception of trusteeship as a device intended to enable the rich to keep their wealth intact. But it seems to me that in a situation in which a large part of the national income and the national property is controlled by the State and the State functionaries, the concept of trusteeship has even greater significance. It is implicit, of course, in the idea of the public sector and the State's use of the public resources that the human instrument of the State will behave as trustees of the public and will utilise public funds in the people's best interests.

Either because he was not intellectually attuned to the Gandhian view of life or because of the overwhelming pressures of dealing with the immediate problems facing the Government, Nehru did not syn-

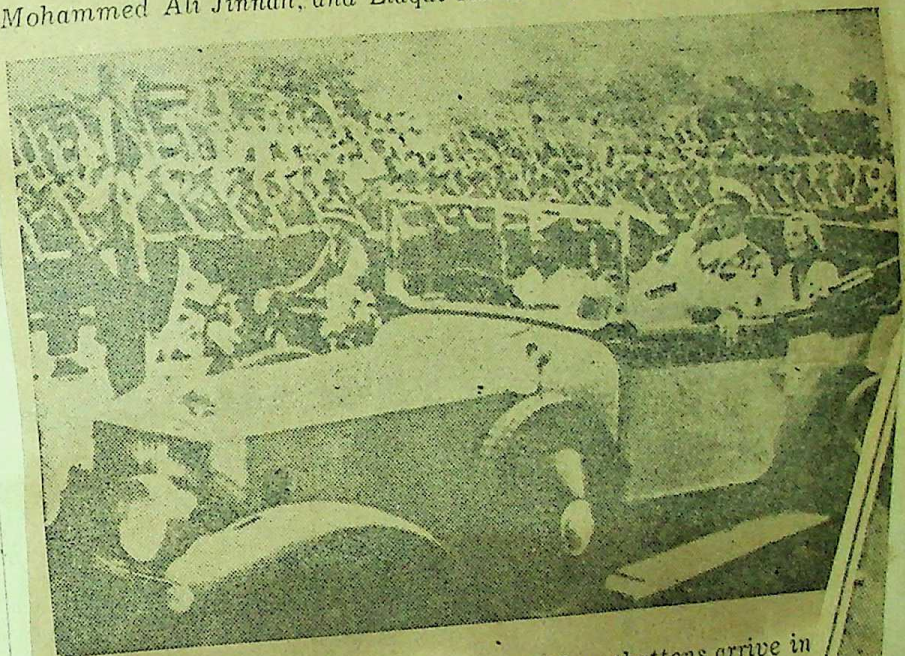








**PARTNERS IN PARTITION!** Mountbatten always felt that "unless these men were faced with the urgency of a time limit, there would always be procrastination...." (Picture shows Sardar Patel, Acharya Kripalani, Pandit Nehru, Baldev Singh, Mountbatten, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, and Liaqat Ali Khan).



**AFTER THE PARTITION...** The Mountbattens arrive in the celebrations marking the birth of Pakistan.



**TRANSFER OF POWER....** India became free, so did Mountbatten to build his own legend.



MOUNTBATTEN'S greatest achievement was not the transfer of power to India and its partition, but his success in hiding the truth behind the hurried and premature transfer resulting in enormous loss of life and the greatest migration in history.

He skilfully and successfully employed the technique of suppression and suggestion to cover his own wrong doings or mishandling. In fact, after the death of other important actors in the Partition drama (Nehru—1964, Patel—1950, Attlee—1967) or those who were closely associated with it (V. P. Menon died in 1968), he had sedulously sought to create evidence denigrating their role and glorifying his own in the great tragedy of Partition and independence.

Through *Freedom at Midnight* (1978) he put out that on 4 September 1947 while he was at Simla both Nehru and Patel sent him urgent message through V. P. Menon to return to Delhi immediately as the communal disturbances were getting beyond their control and that Nehru and Patel needed not only his advice but also his help and that India would be lost if he did not return. Likewise in the interviews recorded in *Mountbatten and the Partition of India* (1982), Mountbatten claims to have severely ticked off Patel for sending to him a rude minute "demanding this and that." Mountbatten thought that Patel was a bully and claims to have told him: "I am the Viceroy of India and you're a little upstart..." According to Mountbatten, Patel became cooperative after this dressing down. It is significant that Mountbatten mentions no date of the incident nor the precise points of differences between him and Patel. Both these stories are fantastic which carry no credibility with any Indian including those who are not the admirers of Sardar Patel.

In keeping with this manner of rewriting history, Mountbatten belittles the role of Attlee in the transfer of power and claims the entire credit for fixing the date for transfer of power by June 1948. Mountbatten described in an interview in 1972-73 as "a ludicrous statement" on the part of Attlee that the latter had thought of a time limit. It deserves to be noted that Attlee in his book *As it Happened* published in 1954 gave a sound and convincing reason: "I had come to the conclusion that it

It is not uncommon to claim intimacy with a personality who is more. Many a scribe are known to have made their fortune by ing "little known facts" about dead celebrities. That a mountbatten's stature would stoop so low to explain the circumstances leading to the Partition of India and that journalists of Collins Lapiere's repute would lap it all up without so much as raising eyebrow sounds improbable. Y. KRISHAN, however, feels that Mountbatten has concealed more than he has revealed in the interview he gave to writers just before his death.

was useless to try to get agreement by discussion between the leaders of the rival communities (viz. Hindus and Muslims). Unless these men were faced with the urgency of a time limit, there would always be procrastination..." Again Francis Williams in his *Minister Remembers* (1961) records a conversation with the latter on this point: "I decided that the only thing to do was to set a time limit and say 'whatever happens our rule is ending on that date...' so we decided on a time limit."

Mountbatten seems to have nursed all these "secrets" till the other main actors in the drama were dead and when he had no fear of being contradicted or challenged, he started spreading these cock and bull stories. A careful analysis of Mountbatten's role in certain crucial steps in the Partition establishes conclusively that he is not a reliable recorder of events, that he has tried to tamper with facts and has the blood of millions on his hands.

Attlee announced on 20 February 1947 in the British Parliament that power would be transferred to India by a date not later than June 1948. According to Attlee's Letter of Instructions of 18 March to Mountbatten the date fixed for the transfer of power was flexible to within one month, that is the terminal date could be either May or July 1948. But the date of transfer was advanced to 15 August 1947 on 4 June 1947.

This advancing of the date of transfer of power and Partition of the country are of importance because it allowed barely 73 days to complete the

stupendous and complex operation of transferring power and partitioning a country of continental dimensions. Mountbatten was fully cognizant of the problems involved, especially the division of the armed forces. Nevertheless Mountbatten pushed through the Partition cynically disregarding his own reservations.

On 7 April 1947, Mountbatten told Jinnah that a minimum of five years were required to divide the army and to run it without British personnel and that it would be a miracle to cut it into half by June 1948. Next day he had ruled out the splitting up of the army before June 1948: "The mechanics won't permit it and I won't..." Mountbatten informed the Defence Committee of his Council on 25 April 1947 that "by unduly hastening the process of separation we may defeat our own ends and produce a situation in which the armed forces may be semi-organised and not reliable."

But paradoxically, Mountbatten shortly thereafter chose to ignore his own serious reservations about the quick division of the armed forces and therefore of the immediate transfer of power and pushed through the transfer of power and Partition in a period of two and a half months. This hurried transfer of power was the direct cause of the breakdown of law and order, and the communal bloodshed as it led to immediate communalisation of the services especially the police and the army.

Campbell Johnson in his *Mission with Mountbatten* (1953) recorded that for the first time Mountbatten on 4 June gave indication at a press

conference that the transfer of power would be on August and gives no indication as to how and when the date was decided upon.

Hodson in his *The Great Divide* (1969) states that the date actually chosen suddenly appeared as if by accident in the June press conference. (It must be noted that he had access to all the papers Mountbatten and had discussions with him and the latter had read his manuscript. Mosley in *The Last Days of British Raj* (1961) said that even Attlee was taken by surprise and shocked by his announcement. Through Larry Collins and Lapierre in *Freedom at Midnight* Mountbatten gave out that he had picked up the date of transfer and Partition suddenly and on the spot and that this was a bomb shell in the House of Commons, the Downing Street and the Buckingham Palace.

Mountbatten allowed yet another version to be spread. Richard Hough, Mountbatten's latest biographer records in *Mountbatten's Hero* of our Times (1980) that it was sometimes in April 1947 that Mountbatten had decided to transfer power not in 14 months (June 1948) but in 5 months (August 1947). He adds that in advancing the date of transfer of power Mountbatten was influenced by sentimental considerations: (i) the forthcoming Royal wedding in November 1947, and (ii) his desire to go back to the Navy urgently. Yet another reason for fixing the date of transfer as 15 August 1947, as advanced by Lapierre and Collins, is that it coincided with the second anniversary of the surrender by the Japan.

try, irrespective of the means and their consequences for India. Subsequently, after retirement from public life, his sole concern had been to build up his own image by suppressing facts, by doctoring them and by allowing all sorts of stories to be floated in explaining the events in the tragic drama of 1947.

In this goal Mountbatten gained immense success. He won the confidence of Indian leaders, Gandhi, Nehru, Patel and was invited to become the first Governor General of India; the greatest honour a hated ruler could get from its erstwhile subjects. The people of India commemorated his memory recently by issuing a postal stamp in his honour and the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, a prestigious cultural and educational institution, has established a centre in London named after him. Perhaps the only person who could not be beguiled by Mountbatten's deceptive charm was Jinnah.

explaining the delay in the announcement of the Partition Awards.

Cyril Radcliffe, signed the Partition Awards for the Punjab and Bengal on 12 August 1947. However, these Awards were announced only on 17 August, two days after the Partition and independence. The withholding of the announcement of the Awards was not only illegal; it also cost many Hindu and Sikh lives as many stayed on in the disputed border areas in the belief that they would eventually be allotted to India. According to Campbell Johnson, Mountbat-

barely five days earlier now was suddenly found to be a stabilising factor; the knowledge of residents' position on either side of the border now became the justification for publication of the Awards.

It is legitimate to ask why Mountbatten was so anxious to advance the date for transfer of power and delay the publication of the Awards, though he knew full well the stupendous difficulties and the grave consequences of doing so. The answer is to be found in Mountbatten's overriding concern for persuading India to remain within the British Commonwealth of Nations. Collins and Lapierre record that George VI told Mountbatten in January 1947 that "it would be a pity if an independent India were to turn its back on the Commonwealth."

In the secret Letter of Instructions of 18 March 1947 from Attlee to Mountbatten now published in the British government documents, Transfer

been announced and was a matter of time — Mountbatten concentrated all his energies and used his consummate skill in selling the proposal through Rajagopalachari, Baldev Singh, V. K. Krishna Menon, John Mathai, Jagjivan Ram and Bhabha by stressing on them that India should join the British Commonwealth for the sake of India's security and stability.

He conveyed to Indian leaders the British Government had no interest in India remaining in the British Commonwealth and in fact might not even welcome it; he frightened them with the prospect of India having a "rotten army" because the British officers would leave if India decided not to join the Commonwealth, that Pakistan, whose leaders had already decided to remain in the Commonwealth, would have immensely superior forces due to the presence of British officers and the likely establishment of large naval and air bases in Pakis-

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Continued on page THREE







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There would have been no Pakistan

THIS month, twenty-four years ago, Pakistan was brought into existence by breaking up the immemorial territorial unity of India.

The new state was the mightiest windfall in recorded history which secessionists in any part of the world could hope to secure. And yet in his broadcast on June 23, 1971, General Yahya Khan, besides proclaiming his determination to remain the sole arbiter over his country's destiny, spoke of the "re-vival of the spirit and enthusiasm with which we succeeded in establishing Pakistan."

The assertion that Pakistan was the outcome of heroic sacrifices is as mythical as the two-nation theory.

Indeed, the concept of a "Muslim homeland" would have found a safe lodgment in the fertile imagination of the Poet of Islam and in the fevered brains of the religious bigots if only the Congress had played its cards with skill and sagacity, especially after the outbreak of the Second World War.

It is true that from the time it came into existence in 1906, the Muslim League campaigned for preferential treatment for its community, but it was only some years before the actual creation of Pakistan that the demand for a separate Muslim state took shape.

## Decisive role

The Muslim League of undivided India was not an assertive or combative organisation and it shivered at the very thought of antagonising the British Raj on any account. Its very survival as an entity in Indian politics depended upon the patronage of the foreign rulers.

Let one of the party's own leading men describe its true nature. Choudhry Khaliquzzaman writes: "The Muslim League was dominated by the titled gentry, Nawabs, landlords and ice huzoors, who were generally well-meaning gentlemen but wanted to serve the Muslim cause only so far as it did not affect their position either socially or in Government quarters."

The League stalwart goes on to say that since its birth, the party's "activities had always been confined to indoor political shows."

Its base remained narrow even after the Khilafat fiasco because "a new set of Nawabs took up the guardianship of this auspicious child which offered them vast opportunities of acquiring honours and titles through their association with the institution."

Was such a body capable of playing a decisive role in carving out a separate state for the Muslim community?

There is good reason to believe that Pakistan would not have materialised at all if, after assuming the responsibilities of government in eight out of the eleven British Indian provinces in 1937, the Congress had remained in office during the fateful war years.

## Just peace

The Second World War was not a mere punitive expedition to curb the overweening territorial ambitions of the German and Italian dictators. It was a Titanic global conflict with the power to change the fate and future of mankind. It not only bombed the status quo out of existence but delivered a mortal blow at colonial domination.

The trend of the world-wide debate on the implications of the war was unmistakable.

In England, Ramsay Muir, an influential writer, described the conflict as the "noblest and the most idealistic war that has ever been fought." Leaders of thought and opinion like Lord Sankey, H. G. Wells and Harold Laski pleaded for a world free from political and economic aggression.

Many among them regarded India's liberation as a cardinal issue in post-war settlement. Professor Laski was convinced that "a free

# Had Congress played its cards well...

By V. B.

Kulkarni

Survival

India in voluntary association with the British Commonwealth of Nations would immensely strengthen us both in the war itself and in the years of peace beyond."

Opinion in America, Russia and China was equally decisive in favour of ending the British Raj in India.

During his overseas visit, Wendell L. Willkie, Republican candidate for U.S. Presidency in 1940, noticed that from Cairo onwards the Indian question confronted him at every turn. It was not merely the non-official leaders, but statesmen in office who saw both the justice and urgency of meeting the demand of the Indian nationalists.

In America, interest in India's freedom was sincere, sustained and widespread.

In a memorandum, prepared on May 5, 1941, A. A. Berle, the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State, spoke of India's "vast influence upon the affairs of the Middle East" and emphasised the need for bringing her into "the partnership of nations" on equal terms with the other members of the British Commonwealth.

President Roosevelt, whose enthusiasm for a just peace was widely known, declared that the American people were going to "keep ablaze the flames of human liberty, reason, democracy and fair play." This was not mere windy rhetoric, for the President was determined to ensure that justice was done to the disfranchised communities of the world.

## Challenge

Not only the President, but his influential colleague, Cordell Hull, the U.S. Secretary of State, brought every kind of pressure to bear on the British statesmen to yield gracefully and betimes to the Indian demand.

"In private conversations," wrote Cordell Hull, "the President talked very bluntly about India with Prime Minister Churchill just as I was talking with British Ambassador Halifax."

The American leaders were telling their British counterparts everything that the most enthusiastic supporter of India's freedom could have expected, and we were convinced that the American people were with us."

Indeed, the President was convinced that American aid to Britain was not meant to protect her Empire. "The thing is," he told his son, "the colonial system means war." India, he declared, should be made a commonwealth "at once."

It is unfortunate that by ignoring the glorious part played by the previous U.S. Governments in helping India to win her freedom and to galvanise her economy, the Nixon Administration is now trying to undo all the good they have done to this country in the past by wantonly bolstering up the aggressive and sadistic regime in Pakistan.

Yahya Khan's statement that Pakistan was the outcome of heroic sacrifices is as mythical as the two-nation theory expounded by the Bangia Desh tragedy. Had not Mahatma Gandhi and Mr Nehru led the Congress into the wilderness during World War II, the Muslim League's dream of a separate state would never have been realised, observes the author in this article.

World opinion was thus strongly in favour of British withdrawal from India.

The predilections of Whitehall on the issue were irrelevant, for, with the entry of America and Russia into the war, Britain could claim neither a monopoly nor even a major share in the task of settling the world.

In any case, the gigantic effort required for winning the war was bound to deplete her financial and armed strength so thoroughly that she could no longer be in a position to face the challenge of Indian nationalism.

England's balances, which had amounted to 4-12 billion dollars (Rs. 3,375 crores) before the war were gone, including the holdings of British individuals in America which had been appropriated by His Majesty's Government and liquidated.

With her economy shattered and facing bankruptcy, Britain was in no position to claim pre-eminence in international affairs. In these circumstances, the predilections of her rulers on the future of the British Empire became totally irrelevant.

In addition to these weighty considerations, India was in a strong position at the time of the outbreak of the war to enforce compliance with her political claims.

The Congress, which spearheaded the national demand for independence, was then at the height of its power and prestige.

In the general election of 1936-37, it had won a phenomenal victory at the polls and was able to form ministries in eight out of the eleven provinces, including the North-West Frontier Province, an overwhelmingly Muslim-majority area.

In contrast, the performance of the Muslim League was pitifully meagre. It was able to capture only 108 seats out of 485 Muslim seats, its influence being felt mostly in the non-Muslim provinces.

Its strength, according to a study, was "so limited in all the legislatures that it could not play an effective part in any province." Nowhere in the vast country could it call any of the popular ministries its own.

The Congress had accepted office in peacetime under a Constitution that gave no real power to the people.

It was not only desirable but most necessary that the party should have retained the responsibilities of government during the convulsive war years to prevent the bureaucracy from making deeper inroads into meagre civil liberties of the people and to secure the liberalisation of the Constitution.

With the provinces under the control of popular ministries and with outstanding leaders like Mr. Nehru, Sardar Patel, Mr. C. Rajagopalachari and Mr. Jinnah in the Viceroy's Executive Council, which Lord Linlithgow had offered to expand in August 1940, it would have been impossible for the British Government to ignore Indian political aspirations.

## Humanitarian

The Viceroy was anxious to win the co-operation of the Congress but made no secret of his determination to turn to Mr. Jinnah for support in the event of the pro-British party not choosing to assist in the war effort.

Britain was fighting a war for survival and ends and means did not matter much to her rulers. In its prosecution,

They had, however, no illusions about the political and economic consequences of the conflict. It was the most ardent imperialists among the war hawks who sealed the fate of their Empire.

Sir Reginald Maxwell, Home Member in the Viceroy's Executive Council, was not a friend of India, but even he could see the writing on the wall. He told an American journalist in 1942 with remarkable candour: "We will be out of this country after the war ends."

No less a person than the Viceroy had ceased to have any illusions about the permanence of the British Raj in India. In an interview with the same journalist, he said: "We are not going to remain in India."



The first reactions of Mahatma Gandhi, Mr. Nehru and the Congress to the war were sound and statesmanlike. Describing his meeting with the Viceroy on September 6, 1939, the Mahatma wrote that he had told him how that his own sym-

pathies were with England and France "from the purely humanitarian standpoint." He was not thinking of his country's freedom then because he was certain that it would come. And yet he chose to change his mind soon which led to the withdrawal of the Congress ministries in October 1939.

The Mahatma's interest was concentrated almost entirely on national problems so that he could not perhaps appreciate fully the implications of a total war.

Mr. Nehru's range of vision on international affairs was, however, much wider. He had seen the working of the Fascist regimes from close quarters and had written strongly against them.

In the early months of 1939 he declared that India's policy was not to "bargain or blackmail in times of crisis. We function differently, and we shall continue this policy whether war comes or not."

When the war broke out in September 1939, the Congress executive declared after much deliberation that the party was "entirely on the side of democracy and freedom."

Apart from the fact that it was wholly unnecessary to compel Britain's withdrawal from India, the situation inside the country called for great circumspection in the activities of the Congress during the war years.

## Communalism

Its hostile attitude towards the British Government then would not have greatly influenced the course of history if the country had not to contend with rampant communalism.

Mr. Jinnah, who had almost suffered political eclipse during the best part of the nineteen thirties, saw in the war a God-sent opportunity to improve his position as leader.

His own and his party's crusade against the Congress, which had begun from the time it had accepted office in 1937, was intensified in proportion to the growth in the Congress's estrangement from the Government. It did not take Muslim League leaders long to win a veto from Whitehall on the constitutional progress of India.

Mr. Jinnah, who in his nationalist days had aspired to become a "Muslim Gokhale," discovered to his supreme satisfaction that the war had transformed him into a "Muslim Mahatma."

It was clear by 1942 that communalism had come of age in India. The Muslim League had persuaded itself that the natural corollary to separate electorates and separate representation was a separate "homeland" for the Muslim "nation."

In these circumstances, the primary and indeed the only task of Congress leadership ought to have been to safeguard the territorial integrity of the country at all costs.

The Cripps offer was demonstrably much below national expectations but in the prevailing circumstances its rejection was fraught with grave consequences. Opinion in the Congress was not unanimous in favour of turning down the British proposals.

## Manoeuvre

Some of its members saw in them an excellent opportunity for defeating the Muslim League's manoeuvre to secure the partition of India.

Since Mahatma Gandhi saw nothing good in them, they were eventually rejected by the Congress.

The launching of the "Quit India" movement as a retaliatory measure against Whitehall's refusal to meet the Congress demand was, in the circumstances of the times, suicidal.

By choosing to wander in the wilderness during the most critical period in Indian history, the Congress not only wantonly abdicated its right and responsibility to give a correct lead to the country but became a party, though unwillingly, to the conversion of the wild dream of the religious bigots into a reality.

Mr. Nehru, who had a far better sense of history than most people, failed to realise that, with the outbreak of the war, it was wholly unnecessary to fight for national freedom.

Far from making serious efforts to avert the tragedy of the country's partition, Mr. Nehru and his colleagues preferred to put themselves out of action by courting imprisonment.

Had they acted otherwise, the champions of Pakistan would have been content to desert it in the distant skies till the end of time! They talk big now because they have got the windfall.

The memory of Independence Day is, for some of us who lived through that exciting period following the end of the Second World War, inextricably linked with that of partition. Mahatma Gandhi evolved a novel technique for achieving freedom brought us success, but the final chapter of that was written in the blood of lakhs of innocent people who were victims of large scale riots in many parts of northern India. Jinnah who could have played a great part in making freedom struggle a seamless unmingled splendour, preferred the way of partition, uncompromising in its intention but unhappy in its end.

Much has been written about the circumstances that caused Jinnah from an ardent nationalist to a fanatical adherent of division; and much will have to be written to explain the reasons for such a change.

Having known him from the early beginnings of our struggle, the conclusion is inescapable that his political fall into two distinct, some essential respects, contradictory phases: the first in 1937, as a staunch Liberal political principles, Hindu-Muslim unity, and thus to see India emerge as a self-governing Dominion; second as the ambitious leader of the Muslim League, whose membership registered between 1937 and 1940 a phenomenal increase, singularly little through personal efforts, vying with the Congress in the adoption of a radical programme aimed at the creation of a separate independent state.

## NOT PRACTICAL

With Jinnah in his last intimate contact in 1917, when I went for the first time in my life to seek his advice, Besant was in India. Ootacamund for his activities and Gandhi was contemplating a march from Madras—a distance of 1,000 miles—to enforce his house for a district. Horniman, Syud Hossain, Dwarakadas, Chaudhary and Shankerlal (from myself). Tilak was coming and I had the time to explain to him that a sect of Hindus (to which he belonged in the temple) had much in common with their Hindu social customs. I of discussion—Gandhi took little notice of it, promptly rejected it, and Jinnah agreed with that.

Later, I saw Jinnah with Mrs. Besant, the wealthiest woman in India in the twenties. I was in the country and had 100 signatures of personalities all over India. He served candour to him in his chamber of High Court cooperation must be desired to be the same reason that the Liberals did particularly appreciate the repercussions of the Khilafat.



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Much has been written on the circumstances that converted Jinnah from an ardent nationalism to a fanatical adherence to division; and much will continue to be written to explain the basic reasons for such a change.

Having known him from the early beginnings of our freedom struggle, the conclusion is inescapable that his political career falls into two distinct, but in some essential respects contradictory phases: the first until 1937, as a staunch Liberal in his political principles, keen on Hindu-Muslim unity, and anxious to see India emerge as a self-governing Dominion; and the second as the ambitious leader of the Muslim League, whose membership registered between 1937 and 1940 a phenomenal rise (but singularly little through his personal efforts), vying with the Congress in the adoption of a radical programme and committed to the creation of Pakistan as a separate independent State.

### NOT PRACTICAL

With Jinnah in his first phase I had intimate contacts going back to 1917, when I went to see him for the first time in his Bombay home to seek his advice: Mrs Besant was in internment at Ootacamund for her home rule activities and Gandhiji was contemplating a march of volunteers from Madras—a distance of 350 miles—to enforce her release. Jinnah called a few friends to his house for a discussion: Tilak, Horniman, Syud Hossain, Jamnadas Dwarkadas, Omar Sobhani and Shankarlal Banker (apart from myself). Tilak was a little late in coming and Jinnah utilized the time to explain to Horniman that a sect among the Muslims (to which he belonged) believed in the ten Avatars and had much in common with Hindus in their inheritance laws and social customs. The main point of discussion—Gandhiji's proposal—took little time. Tilak promptly rejected it as impracticable and Jinnah and Horniman agreed with that view.

Later, I saw him in connexion with Mrs Besant's Commonwealth of India Bill in the early twenties. I was going round the country and had secured over a 100 signatures of leading personalities all over India, including Jinnah's. He spoke with unreserved candour when I called on him in his chamber in the Bombay High Court. Gandhiji's non-cooperation movement he considered to be dangerous for the same reason that Mrs Besant and the Liberals did; and he was particularly apprehensive about the repercussions on Indian Muslims of the Khilafat movement. The



## THE TERRIBLE PRICE OF OPPORTUNISM

When a London palmist predicted that Mr Jinnah would become the head of a State, he laughed at the suggestion as absurd. Recalling that incident, B. SHIVA RAO—for whom Independence Day revives memories of British exploitation of Indian blunders—recalls in this article the pressures and forces that eventually led to partition.

enrolment of ignorant and fanatical Muslims in the movement struck him as extremely unwise.

I got even closer to Jinnah in 1924 when he was a member of the Central Legislative Assembly. Both he and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru were convinced early in the proceedings of the Muddiman Reforms Committee (of which they were members) that which they were members; a unanimity report became inevitable, with Sir Sivaswamy Aiyar and Dr R. P. Paranjpye willing to lend the weight of their support. Jinnah frequently walked over from Maiden's Hotel in Delhi to Metcalfe House where Sapru was staying (with me as his Secretary). After dinner, they would discuss Sapru's first draft of the various chapters. There were negligible differences in their standpoints, easily resolved by a little give-and-take. "Sapru," he said one night, "I think I have a solution for the Hindu-Muslim problem. You destroy your orthodox priestly class and we will destroy our mullahs and there will be communal peace."

The fact is that Jinnah, despite all his differences with Gandhiji, retained his nationalist viewpoint and his deep faith in

Liberal principles certainly until 1937. It was in 1925 (or perhaps the following year) that in supporting Pandit Motilal Nehru's resolution inviting the British Government to summon a representative Round Table Conference to solve the Indian problem, that Jinnah ridiculed the two-nations theory in his speech: India is not a nation, we are told. We were a people when the Great War was going on and an appeal was made to India for blood and money. We are not a people nor a nation when we ask you for a substantial advance towards responsible government and parliamentary institutions.

### HURT VANITY

No Muslim leader was more genuine in endorsing the national demand than Jinnah was in the twenties. His vanity was somewhat hurt by the preference shown by Gandhiji and the other Congress leaders for the Ali Brothers and other Muslims in the Congress. To retain his nuisance value, he thought it would be better tactics to step up the Muslim demand for separate and privileged treatment. At the All-

Parties Committee meeting at Dr Ansari's residence in Daryaganj (Delhi) in 1928, Jinnah put forward for the first time a claim for reservation of seats in all the provincial legislatures, including the Punjab and Bengal, where the Muslims constituted a majority of the population. Pandit Motilal's prompt rejection of the latter part of the formula led to an abrupt termination of the Conference. It was a delicate situation: Jinnah's withdrawal could mean the sabotage of the national boycott of the Simon Commission. "Saroini," said Pandit Motilal in his dictatorial way, "it is your business now to bring Jinnah back." She was not entirely successful in her appeal to him; but Jinnah did not break away from the boycott of the Commission.

Later, at the first Round Table Conference in London in 1930, he expressed the hope that out of its deliberations would emerge the Dominion of India. At the inaugural meeting, while a plebiscite one morning was in progress, he said, "Burma is not on today's agenda, but Ramsay MacDonald is going to spring a surprise on us towards the end of the year." (Continued on Page III)



# THE PRICE OF OPPORTUNISM

(Continued from Page 1)

the day's proceedings by rushing a proposal through for Burma's separation without a discussion. Some leading Indian delegates have already agreed to such a procedure. He suggested that I should raise an objection and ask for a Committee to examine the proposal. I consulted H. P. Mody and C. Y. Chintamani, editor of the Allahabad Leader and sought their support for my proposal of a separate Committee on Burma. The plan worked and a Committee came into being, though MacDonald showed considerable annoyance at my raising the point.

The episode affords convincing evidence that Jinnah at that time believed in a united India, even including Burma. The scheme of partition was not then in the air, and so far as Jinnah was concerned, he was more concerned with the Round Table Conference on such matters as Army, Indianization and the structure of the all-India federation than Sapru or Jayakar. Jinnah was more or less an isolated figure at the Conference table. For the British Conservatives, Sir Muhammad Shafi and Sir Zafrullah Khan proved much more useful than Jinnah. The end of the three sessions of the Round Table Conference found Jinnah completely cut off from the main stream of Indian public life. In disgust he settled down for a while in London for practice in the Privy Council.

## IN HIS HAND

A strange incident (which Sarojini Naidu, who was in London during the Round Table Conference period, told me) deserves to be recorded here. A palmist who read Jinnah's hand prophesied for him the headship of an independent State at the end of his career. Jinnah laughed at the suggestion as absurd; but the memory of it might have lingered and served many years later as an activating agent on his sub-conscious mind.

The Privy Council experience did not prove encouraging and the inauguration of the 1935 Constitution appeared to revive Jinnah's interest in Indian politics. He returned to India to organize the Muslim League for the general elections in the spring of 1937. The sharp cleavage of opinion in the Congress, with the left wing committed to "the wrecking of the Constitution from within", was a negative factor in his favour. His initial efforts, however, proved a dismal failure. Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan in the Punjab preferred to be his own master as the leader of the Unionist Party; in Bengal, Mr Fazlul Haq had his own affiliations with the Krishak Praja Party; in the U.P. Muslim landlords, ignoring his appeal, sailed under the banner of the National Agriculturists' Party.

The general elections, contrary to all calculations, gave the Congress a majority in six or seven provinces. The Muslim League's performance in these provinces

our recent history. Much was made of "Congress atrocities" at that time in some of the northern provinces in which its Ministries functioned. Lord Linlithgow rejected a proposal which I made to him in the course of an interview, after securing Gandhiji's approval, for a Committee of Inquiry headed by Sir Maurice Gwyer, the Chief Justice of the Federal Court. How could such a Committee be appointed, the Viceroy asked me, when the Governors of the provinces concerned had brought no complaints of unjust treatment of Muslims to his notice? In 1967 at a Conference in London, Sir Francis Wylie, a former Governor of the U.P., dismissed the atrocities story as "moonshine".

The reasons for the growth of the Pakistan movement appear to lie elsewhere. With the federal elections scheduled for 1938 or 1939, all parties opposed to the Congress and, in particular, to its pro-Socialist elements—the ruling princes, landlords and industrialists, whether Muslim, Hindu or Sikh—felt the imperative need for a rallying point. That was supplied by the Muslim League. In some of the by-elections after the 1937 elections such a coalition round the League had seemed to work. Every Muslim in the various legislatures, elected or nominated, was encouraged through official hints to join the League. An astute politician, Jinnah saw the tactical advantage of assuring the princes well before the federal elections that the League would not interfere in the internal affairs of the States.

Fed by such different sources for different reasons, the Muslim League rapidly grew in strength and influence. It may seem a small point today, but the League, following the example of the Congress, adopted complete independence as its goal. The two-nations theory (denounced in caustic terms by him in the twenties) was made the basis for the new demand of the League, but had not yet crystallized in the concept of Pakistan. Possibly, if the left wing of the Congress had played a less intransigent rôle on the outbreak of the Second World War and permitted the party Ministers to continue in office, the Viceroy might have been persuaded to attempt a wartime federation with some conventions introduced to confer on the Executive Council the status and even some of the functions of a National Government.

## TIME OF WAR

Outside these domestic considerations was the obvious fact that Lord Linlithgow did not enjoy the confidence of the new British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill. In the early weeks of the war, when I pointed out in an interview with the Viceroy that a good deal of responsibility could be passed on to the Executive through the establishment of suitable conventions, he said, "Yes, it would be possible if all the Congressmen were like Mr. Rajagopalachari and Pandit

fessed to me at Lahore, that he was not free to break away from Jinnah.

To do Jinnah justice, he was too hard-headed a politician to subscribe readily to the concept of a separate Pakistan. The League had become by 1940 a formidable Muslim mass movement, with a momentum he could not resist. Suhrawardy (whom he did not trust) declared at a League session: "Pakistan is only our latest demand, but not the last one". Jinnah, if Khaliquzzaman's record (in Pathways to Pakistan) is authentic, had doubts at the start about Pakistan being a workable scheme. He had sown the wind, but was being forced by circumstances over which he had hardly any control, to face the whirlwind. Early in 1940 the Viceroy said to me: "Jinnah is coming to see me next week. I am going to tell him, a negative attitude—no, no, to everything coming from the Congress side—won't help him. He must have a positive scheme of his own".

## ON A WAVE

This, in my view, gives a glimpse of the forces at work. Jinnah, for long years the leader of a minority party and after the Round Table Conferences with little influence even on the Muslims, seemed to enjoy the experience of being on the crest of a wave which he certainly did not create and about whose direction he was uncertain. For Churchill it was a godsend to have the Muslim League adopting an uncompromising position. He argued with President Roosevelt (who was pleading from across the Atlantic for a quick and honourable settlement with India so that she could come wholeheartedly into the war): whom does the Congress represent, without the princely States (120 million people), without the Muslim League (90 million) without the Untouchables (60 million), not to mention the other minorities? This over-simplified analysis, Churchill professed seriously to believe, summed up the Indian situation during the Second World War. It was good as a debating point against Roosevelt's moves for a solution of the Indian problem.

By the time the war came to an end, Roosevelt was dead and Churchill was out of office. Attlee, the new British Prime Minister, did his utmost to hasten a settlement in India, assisted by two men with knowledge of Indian conditions and deeply sympathetic to our aspirations—Pethick-Lawrence and Stafford Cripps. But they could not, on the Indian problem, overlook the direct consequences of Churchill's sit-pretty policy. Forces had arisen in India during the war years which neither they nor the Congress could ignore. Jinnah seemed to keep an open mind on the issue of Pakistan, as is apparent from his ten point memorandum to Sir B. N. Rau after the election of the Constituent Assembly in the late summer of 1946. But the pressure on him was too great to resist. He sub-

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# TOWARDS PARTITION

Rise of Muslims in Indian Politics. An analysis of developments from 1885 to 1906. By Rafiq Zakaria (Somaiya, Bombay, Rs 45.)

**PARTITION** was the price India paid for the social distance which separated the Muslims and the Hindus; even that terrible price has not bridged that distance after 22 years of independence. The controversies and conflicts that engulfed the Indian political arena from 1937 to 1947, leading to partition, had their origin in the period between 1885, when the Indian National Congress was born, and 1906 when the All-India Muslim League came into being. Dr Zakaria demolishes the myth that the father of Muslim "nationhood" was Jinnah; in fact, Muslims drew much of their social and political inspiration from Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. Even the subsequent separatist thoughts of Jinnah were fashioned after Sir Syed's beliefs. All the arguments that Jinnah later advanced for partitioning the sub-continent were not only the same which Sir Syed used while opposing the Congress but were apparently copied from the latter's utterances.

The second myth that Dr Zakaria demolishes is that the Muslims have always been pet children of the British. If the 1857 Mutiny is considered as the watershed of Muslim-British-Hindu relations, the post-Mutiny period proved particularly oppressive for the Muslims. Lord Roberts, angered at the Muslims' role in the Mutiny, tersely commented that the British should show "these rascally Mussalmans that with God's help Englishmen will be the masters of India". To perpetuate British domination, it was thought necessary to keep the Muslims under foot. The British attitude towards the Hindus became generous in comparison; the Muslims "forfeited" the confidence of their foreign rulers.

It was against such "a bleak background" that the Muslims began their struggle for survival under the British. Distrusted by the rulers and disliked by the Hindus, their plight became so "corrupt and degrading" that even the administration was so alarmed, especially because one section of the Indian people was advancing and the other "decaying", that it issued a Resolution in 1871 directing "further and more systematic encouragement be given to the Muslims". Additionally, Sir William Hunter's book "Indian Mussalmans: Are they bound in conscience to rise against the Queen?", published in 1871 pinpointed the areas of public participatory employment from which Muslims had been excluded.

Unfortunately, the relative absence of Muslims (of the 72 delegates, only two were Muslims) from the first meeting of the Indian National Congress in 1885, though entirely accidental, was to lead to further bitterness. The then two premier Muslim organisations, the Muhammadan Association and the Muhammadan Literary Society, refused to send delegates to the second Congress, the latter pointing out that the Muslims were not prepared to accept proposals which might revolutionise time-honoured institutions. There was universal regret at the Muslim attitude. The Statesman (December 19, 1886) referred to it as "Muslim indifference to this great movement".

Sir Syed continued to oppose the Congress and preach loyalty to the British; joining the Congress, according to him, would be a national disaster, their future dark under a representative system of government which would only result in the perpetual subjugation of the Muslims by the Hindus. It was he who first raised the two-nation theory which 50 years later Jinnah propagated in a more sophisticated tongue. The Congress tried to counter Sir Syed's propaganda by enlisting as its president Badruddin Tyabjee; this provided the stimulus for a closer affinity to the Muslim cause. The death of Sir Syed meanwhile reduced Muslim hostility to the Congress and Muslims veered round to the view that the Congress could be supported in the Jehad-e-Akbar (the big struggle for redressal of grievances) as against the Jehad-e-Asgar (the small struggle for religious rights and liberty). Jinnah was to make a mark at the 22nd Congress at Calcutta—attended incidentally by 50 Muslim delegates and 200 Muslim visitors—by his speech decrying reservation of seats in legislatures and services.

However, the demand for a distinct political organisation to look after the political rights of Muslims grew, despite Congress efforts against it. Thanks largely to Lord Minto's sympathetic attitude, the All-India Muslim League was born in Dacca on December 31, 1906, after the conclusion of the Muslim Educational Conference. Significantly, at the same time, another Muslim meeting was held in Calcutta under the presidency of Maulvi Ghulam Ahmed Khan. As a counter-move against the League, it set up the Indian Mussalmans Association to ventilate the special grievances of the Muslims but in collaboration with other communities. Jinnah was in the 26-member preliminary committee set up to promote the cause of the new body.

Dr Zakaria skilfully analyses the many causative links in the fluctuating fortunes of Muslim-Hindu relations. The main concern of the rising generation of that period, Hindus and Muslims alike, was the need for English education. The differences between the two communities were basic in the sense that Hindus welcomed change and the Muslims didn't.

Essentially, however, what inhibited the Muslims' rise was the failure of the leadership to give their movements that broad-minded thrust which would have assimilated the community rapidly into the national mainstream. Instead, they continued to seek short-term advantages through separate electorates and special concessions. Dr Zakaria rightly asks: "These safeguards served their purpose so long as the British were in India; but what was to happen if and when the British left?" His book is a timely reminder to Hindus and Muslims alike of the relevance of the quest for greater trust between the two communities, and is therefore to be welcomed. A second study, of the period subsequent to 1906, should be worth the effort if only to prove how far the concept of Indian citizenship has stood the challenges of controversies and conflicts of the last half a century.



...the new provincial constitution this question of opting out will obviously be a major issue and all those entitled to vote under the new franchise will be able to take their share in a truly democratic decision."

But the Congress and its President persisted. Once again (June 14) Maulana Azad wrote to the Viceroy regretting that "our view-point was not accepted" by the Cabinet Mission.

But he made it clear that "We came to the conclusion also that unsatisfactory as were many of the provisions of your statement of May 16, we would try to work them according to our own interpretation and with a view to achieving our objective."

## Defects

Lord Wavell replied the next day only to point out that grouping was not compulsory since the option to quit was there. But the provinces had to sit in the defined sections, to begin with.

On June 16 the Cabinet Mission announced its proposals for an Interim Government.

The result was that the debate over the long-term proposals of May 16 proceeded simultaneously with negotiations for establishing an Interim Government, each affecting the other.

Thus, Maulana Azad's letter of June 24 to the Viceroy expressed the Congress views on both sets of proposals. The proposals for an Interim Government were rejected.

With regard to the proposals made in the statement of May 16, relating to the formation and functioning of the constitution-making body, the Working Committee of the Congress passed a resolution on May 24, and conversations and correspondence have taken place between Your Excellency and the Cabinet Mission on the one side and myself and some of my colleagues on the other.

"In these we have pointed out what in our opinion were the defects in the proposals. We also gave our interpretation of some of the provisions of the statement."

"While adhering to our views we accept your proposals and are prepared to work them with a view to achieving our objective."

By now Maulana Azad had written three letters in criticism of the grouping formula of the Cabinet Mission in the latter two of which he clung to the Congress interpretation despite its categorical rejection by the authors of the proposals as far back as May 24.

In view of this, his later criticism of Mr. Nehru rings hollow...

Nor did Mr. Jinnah wait till Mr. Nehru's press conference of July 10 to voice his objection to the Congress conditions.

...ces are fully autonomous and have the right to decide the question at any stage they like.

"Paragraph 15 and the general spirit of the proposals support the Congress interpretation."

"The provinces have the right to decide either at the very beginning before the group constitution has been framed at all or at the end after they have examined the group constitution as it has emerged from the committee of the Constituent Assembly."

"I am convinced that the Congress interpretation cannot be challenged. If a province decides to remain outside the group from the very beginning, it cannot be compelled to come in."

In what way was this different in substance from Mr. Nehru's later outburst?

It must be stressed the Gandhiji fully agreed with this policy. Indeed, he even forbade Congress representatives from Assam from entering the eastern section with Bengal.

Sardar Patel was also in agreement with his Party's attitude.

## Grievance

Ever quick to object, Mr. Jinnah replied the day following (June 27) complaining "Notwithstanding the clear statement of May 16 and the further statement of the Cabinet Delegation and the Viceroy of May 25, clarifying and finally giving their authoritative interpretation, the Congress, both in the letter of the President and their resolution, adhere to their wrong interpretation that any province or provinces, is or are entitled to opt out initially and that they have a right at any stage to do so."

"This is clear indication that the Congress is not accepting the long-term proposals in a sincere and honest spirit of co-operation and peaceful settlement."

"If they persist in this and adopt measures to set at naught what is described by the statement of the Delegation of May 25 to constitute the essential feature of the scheme the whole plan will be wrecked at its very inception."

He had another grievance, besides. The League had accepted the Mission's proposals of June 16 for an Interim Government which the Congress had rejected.

But, instead of calling upon the League to form the Government, the Mission had decided to start afresh.

The League's General Secretary, Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan, announced that the League's Council was being summoned.

He spoke of "the grave possibility of the All-India Muslim League not participating in the

## Reaction

The Muslim League had demanded partition of India since March 1940 when the Lahore resolution, embodying the demand, was passed.

The Cripps proposals of 1942 enabled a province to secede from the Indian Union. But not so the Mission's Plan.

If the League accepted it, as indeed it did, then, despite its commitment to Pakistan, it had to function according to the Mission's plan which did not provide for secession from the Union.

The provisions of the plan could be altered only by consent of both parties and whatever be its objective the League had accepted the procedure and the terms of the Mission's Plan. The resolution was regarded as good acceptance by the Congress as well as the British.

To turn to the Congress reaction: on May 20, 1946, its President, Maulana Azad, wrote to the leader of the Cabinet Mission, the Secretary of State for India, Lord Pethwick Lawrence, contending that the Constituent Assembly would be a sovereign body and that it would be "open to the Assembly to vary in any way it likes the recommendations and the procedure suggested" by the Mission.

He specifically took exception to the procedure whereby the provinces had initially to sit in the

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# INDIA'S PARTITION-

## could it have been avoided

TWENTY-FIVE years ago, almost to a day, 10, 1946, Jawaharlal Nehru made a statement that down in history as "the outburst" that wrecked the Cabinet Mission's plan for a free united India. But was only guilty person? In this article A. G. NOORANI the events leading to the Mountbatten Plan . . . .

That outburst, on July 10, 1946, is argued, destroyed the British Cabinet Mission's Plan of May 16, 1946, which provided for a united India and had been accepted by both the Congress and the Muslim League.

The partition of India which was a distinct possibility became an utter inevitability.

Mr. Nehru's biographer, Mr. Michael Brecher, wrote in 1959 "it destroyed the facade of agreement which the Cabinet Mission tried to maintain. It fact, it sparked the collapse of the Mission and was a serious tactical error."

"Jinnah was given an incompatible wedge to press more openly for Pakistan on the grounds of Congress tyranny."

"At the end of July the League withdrew its acceptance of the Mission's long-run plan and called for 'direct-action'."

### Denial

This criticism won wide and almost unanimous acceptance mainly because earlier, in 1959, Maulana Azad's autobiography "India Wins Freedom" was published and he criticised Mr. Nehru for his remarks at the conference in no uncertain terms as "one of those unfortunate events which changed the course of history."

However, Mr. Nehru's critics, of various political hues, have hugged the criticism since it provides such a comforting explanation for the collapse of an agreed plan which might have saved India's unity.

On the other hand, Mr. Nehru's admirers have denied that his remarks had any damaging effect whatever. Where lies the truth?

The Cabinet Mission's plan envisaged a Centre confined to the three subjects of defence, foreign affairs and communications.

The provinces were free to form groups with common legislatures and executives and each group could determine which subjects to have in common and which to leave to the provinces (Para 15).

The plan also provided the procedure for Constitution-making (Para 19).

First, a preliminary meeting of the Constituent Assembly was to be held to appoint committees and lay down the general order of business.

Thereafter, the provincial representatives were to divide into three sections; one, comprising Bengal and Assam, another Punjab, the North-West Frontier Province and Sind, and the third, the rest of India.

### Contrast

These sections were to settle provincial constitutions and also to decide whether to have a group

section to which they had been attached in the plan. The liberty to opt later, he feared, might be nullified by the section framing "rules for elections and otherwise."

In view of the Maulana's later criticism of Mr. Nehru his letter deserves particularly to be recalled.

On May 24 the Congress Working Committee passed a resolution taking the same stand.

"The statement of the Cabinet delegation affirms the basic principle of provincial autonomy and residuary powers vested in the provinces. It is further said that provinces should be free to form groups."

"Subsequently, however, it is recommended that provincial representatives will divide up into sections which shall proceed to settle the provincial constitutions for the provinces in each section and shall also decide whether any group constitution shall be set up for those provinces."

"There is a marked discrepancy in the two separate provisions, and it would appear that a measure of compulsion is introduced which clearly infringes the basic principle of provincial autonomy."

"In order to retain the recommended character of the statement, and in order to make the clauses consistent with each other, the committee read paragraph 15 to mean that, in the first instance, the respective provinces shall make their choice whether or not to belong to the section in which they are placed."

### Regret

"Thus the Constituent Assembly must be considered as a sovereign body with final authority for the purpose of drawing up a constitution and giving effect to it." (emphasis is mine throughout)

The very next day the Cabinet Mission issued a statement answering Mr. Jinnah's statement of May 22 and the Congress Executive's resolution of May 24.

It said "The interpretation put by the Congress resolution on paragraph 15 of the Statement to the effect that the Provinces can in the first instance make the choice whether or not to belong to the section in which they are placed does not accord with the Delegation's intentions."

"The reasons for the grouping of the Provinces are well known and this is an essential feature of the scheme and can only be modified by agreement between the parties."

"The right to opt out of the groups after the constitution-making has been completed will be exercised by the provinces."

The very day after Maulana Azad's last letter, the Muslim League Working Committee passed a resolution (June 25) in which he referred specifically to the Maulana's letter.

It said "The Working Committee cannot accept the contention of the Congress contained in the aforesaid letter that the Congress is entitled to adhere to its interpretation . . . which is opposed to the interpretation and explanation embodied in the statement issued by the Cabinet Delegation and the Viceroy on May 24, 1946."

### Protection

Thus the issue was joined, clearly and publicly. It was quite plain that the last best hope for saving India's unity, the Mission's Plan, was in peril.

But folly has its own momentum. The League executive's resolution of June 25 was followed by its Congress counterpart's resolution of June 26.

"They felt, however, that, taking the proposals as a whole there was sufficient scope for enlarging and strengthening the Central authority and for fully ensuring the right of a province to act according to its choice in regard to grouping, and to give protection to such minorities as might otherwise be placed at a disadvantage."

On this basis the Congress decided to "join the proposed Constituent Assembly."

Maulana Azad issued a statement that day surveying the negotiation and explaining the Congress stand.

He said "Paragraph 15 of the Cabinet proposals has clearly recognised the right of provinces to form groups or not. The Cabinet Mission intended that the provinces should exercise the right at a particular stage."

### Support

"The Congress working Committee held that whatever the intention of the Cabinet Mission, the statement of May 16 does not bear out the view that the provinces should be placed at a particular stage."



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**MAULANA AZAD: He told the Viceroy that the Congress would try to work the British plan "according to our own interpretation..."**

Constituent Assembly for lack of assurance that the fundamental principles of the Cabinet Mission Scheme will be adhered to."

This was on June 30 well before Mr. Nehru spoke.

The All-India Congress Committee met in Bombay on July 7 and ratified the Working Committee's decision. The opposition to the Cabinet Mission's Plan came from the members of the Congress Socialist Party.

Mr. Nehru took over the office of President of the Congress from Maulana Azad.

It seemed a time for indiscretion. Winding up the AICC's Proceedings on July 7, Mr. Nehru declared: "We are not bound by a single thing except that we have decided for the moment to go to the Constituent Assembly."

As far as he could see, he said, it was not a question of the Congress accepting any plan, long or short.

They would remain in the Assembly so long as they thought it was for India's good and they would come out when they thought it was injuring their cause.

## Interference

On July 10 he addressed the historic press conference in which he made it plain that while the Congress "had inevitably agreed to a certain process of going into it, that is, the election of candidates; but what we do there we are entirely and absolutely free to determine."

Referring to the two provisos laid down by the Mission, namely proper arrangements for minorities and a treaty between India and England, he stressed that he would have no treaty with the British Government if they sought to impose anything upon India; as for the minorities it was a domestic problem and we shall no doubt succeed in solving it.

"We accept no outsider's interference in it, certainly not the British Government's interference, and therefore these two limiting factors to the sovereignty of the Constituent Assembly are not accepted by us."

With regard to the question of grouping, Mr. Nehru said: "The big probability is, from any approach to the question, there will be no grouping. Obviously, section A will decide against grouping."

## Inevitable

"Speaking in betting language, there is a four to one chance of the North-West Frontier Province deciding against grouping. Then group B collapses."

"It is highly likely that Bengal and Assam will decide against grouping although I would not like to say what the initial decision may be since it is evenly balanced."

"But I can say with every assurance and conviction that there is going to be finally no grouping there, because Assam will not tolerate it under any circumstances whatever."

"Thus you see this grouping business, approached from any point of view, does not get us on at all."

Dealing with the powers of the proposed Union Centre, Mr. Nehru said that defence and communications would embrace a large number of industries necessary for their support. Foreign affairs must inevitably include foreign trade policy.

It was equally inevitable that the Union must raise its finances by taxation, rather than by any system of contribution or dues from the provinces.

Further, the Centre must obviously control currency and credit; and there must be an overall authority to settle inter-provincial disputes and to deal with administrative or economic breakdowns.

Now, the only two meritorious features of the Mission's plan in Mr. Jinnah's eyes were a weak Centre, with residuary powers to the provinces, and the provincial groups.

## Handle

These, as Dr. R. C. Majumdar put it, "might make amends for sacrificing the idea of a sovereign Pakistan." Mr. Nehru would unilaterally remove both these features.

But the point is that that was also the Congress view as declared in its resolutions and in the letters of its President.

Maulana Azad's memoirs say: "I must place on record that Jawaharlal's statement was wrong and that the plan could not be so modified." But his own letters, as we have noted, said much the same thing.

Years later Dr. K. M. Munshi wrote in his memoirs that Mr. Nehru "spoke what was in our hearts but gave a handle to Jinnah."

The first is apparent from the record. As for the second, Mr. Jinnah had repeatedly objected and had convened the League's Council much before Mr. Nehru spoke.

But Mr. Nehru's admirers are also wrong in holding that the outbreak was inconsequential. It certainly aggravated an already difficult situation.

## Withdrawal

Mr. Jinnah, as might be expected, protested. He characterised the statement as "a complete repudiation" of the plan and asked the British Government "to make it clear beyond doubt and remove the impression that the Congress has accepted the long-term scheme."

The British Government went half-way. On July 18 Lord Pethick Lawrence in the Lords and Sir Stafford Cripps in the Commons, both declared that the Provinces had to join the assigned sections.

They could opt out of the group, if one is formed, only later.

The plan could not be modified unilaterally and the grouping formula was an "essential feature of the scheme."

Undeterred, Mr. Nehru repeated his views at a public meeting in Delhi on July 22.

The League Council met in Bombay and, withdrawing its acceptance of the Mission's Plan, passed the famous "Direct Action" resolution (June 29). The resolution withdrawing the acceptance cited Maulana Azad's letter of June 25 and the Congress resolutions as well as Mr. Nehru's outburst.

There is no doubt that here the Muslim League stood on a firm ground," Dr. R. C. Majumdar holds.

## Astute

An alarmed Congress Working Committee met at Wardha. "It faced a dilemma," the Maulana remarked. The prestige of the President or the settlement?

The Committee's resolution (August 8), as well as the past record, suggests that there was no such dilemma. Mr. Nehru had spoken for all; only he had spoken bluntly.

The Working Committee's resolution said that "they accepted the scheme in its entirety."

"They interpreted it so as to resolve the inconsistencies contained in it and fill the omissions in accordance with the principles laid down in the statement."

Thus the Committee stood by its earlier stand which was no different from Mr. Nehru's.

Mr. Jinnah was far too astute to repeat the Congress mistakes of 1939 and 1942. He managed to enter the Interim Government even at some cost of prestige.

But when the Viceroy asked him to convene the League Council to retract its Bombay resolutions, he

argued that the Congress itself had not accepted the Mission's Plan in toto.

As Mr. V. P. Menon has revealed, earlier in August the Viceroy had tried to persuade the Congress to issue a declaration of unreserved acceptance, and failed.

But since the Congress was now insisting on the League's acceptance of the Mission's Plan, which was the basis of membership of the Interim Government, the Viceroy found himself in an awkward position.

The British Government invited the Indian leaders to London. Mr. Nehru, Sardar Baldev Singh, Mr. Jinnah and Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan went there.

The British Government issued a statement on December 6 on the conclusion of the talks.

"His Majesty's Government have had legal advice, which confirms that the statement of May 18 means what the Cabinet Mission have always stated was their intention."

## Power

The Congress was urged "to accept the view of the Cabinet Mission, in order that the way may be open for the Muslim League to reconsider this attitude."

The last para of the statement was ominous. It stated "There has never been any prospect of success for the Constituent Assembly except on this basis of an agreed procedure."

"Should a constitution come to be framed by a Constituent Assembly in which a large section of the Indian population had not been represented, His Majesty's Government could not of course contemplate — as the Congress have stated they would not contemplate — forcing such a constitution upon any unwilling part of the country."

This was a clear hint of partition.

The Congress was furious, but it refused to alter its stand.

The AICC passed a resolution on January 6, 1947, which advised "action in accordance with the interpretation of the British Government" but reserved the right to the provinces to leave the groups earlier in the event of "any attempt at compulsion."

Worse still, as Dr. Munshi's memoirs candidly reveal, the Congress, on his advice, had decided "to exploit the rule-making power of the Constituent Assembly" in order "to exercise control over the sections and Provinces."

He adds that Lord Wavel had come to know of this and it "confirmed his belief that the Congress had not in fact accepted the May



**JAWAHARLAL NEHRU:** "We accept no outsider's interference ..... certainly not the British Government's interference....."

16 plan and was exploring every avenue to circumvent the autonomy of the sections — the only provision of the plan which was attractive to the Muslim League."

When the League's Working Committee met in Karachi it passed a resolution (January 31) citing these very rules in support of its case that the Congress had failed to accept the British Government's interpretation, the Constituent Assembly's decisions had no force.

Thus, the old deadlock was revived with each asking the other to accept the Mission's Plan.

The Congress members threatened that unless the League's members resigned from the Interim Government, they would do so themselves.

The Viceroy suggested to London another attempt to persuade the Congress to declare that its acceptance was not a qualified one. He was over-ruled.

## Too late

The British Government resolved the dilemma by issuing the famous statement of February 20, 1947, announcing its resolve to transfer power to Indian hands by June 30, 1948.

Lord Wavell was replaced as Viceroy by Lord Mountbatten.

The new Viceroy tried to revive the Mission's Plan but it was too late. Already in March 1947 the Congress had demanded partition of Punjab and Bengal.

Even at that late hour Sir Stafford Cripps asked Mr. Sudhir Ghosh to persuade the Congress "to tell the world quite bluntly and in detail what they really mean when they say they ac-

cept the British Interpretation" as set out in the statement of December 6.

The new Viceroy did try to inject life into the Mission's Plan but failed. He was able to bring about a settlement eventually. But, alas, that was on the basis of partition.

Men like Sir Chimanlal Setalvad and Prof. D. R. Gadgil had publicly pleaded with Congress, while the tragedy was still being enacted, unconditionally to accept the Mission's Plan.

Sir Chimanlal later wrote that the plan "had been killed by the wobbling and vacillating attitude of one party" (the Congress).

## Chaos

He added, "The cherished boon of a United India had fallen into their lap, but they by their own want of political wisdom threw it out and made it beyond their reach."

Not Mr. Nehru alone but the entire Congress leadership was responsible for destroying the Mission's scheme, the last chance of preserving the country's unity.

The responsibility for bringing about the partition itself, however, is a much wider period involving the Congress-League relations.

In 1947 Mr. Jinnah won Pakistan. "But has he succeeded in doing good to the Muslims themselves and to his country?" Sir Chimanlal rightly asked.

He prophetically predicted, "This division of India has laid foundations of interminable quarrels and chaos which will bring untold suffering to generations yet unborn."



Why British  
Cabinet  
Mission failed—II

# How Cripps tried to accommodate Congress

**THE** Congress President, Maulana Azad, complained to the Secretary of State on May 20 that while the provinces were given freedom to form groups, procedurally they were compelled to sit in a section.

He was not unmindful of the liberty given to a province to opt out of a group later, but said that a dominating province in a section "may even conceivably lay down rules, for elections and otherwise, thereby nullifying the provision for a province to opt out of a group."

He also contended that the Constituent Assembly would be a sovereign body and therefore free to vary "in any way it likes" the recommendations and the procedure suggested by the Mission.

The day before Gandhi had taken up a similar point in a letter to Lord Pethick-Lawrence, the Secretary of State.

Mr Jinnah issued a non-committal statement on May 22 analysing the Mission's proposals against the background of the negotiations preceding it. In the main, it was detailed criticism of those features of the Mission's proposals which departed from the League's proposals of May 11. Mr Jinnah

The Council of the All India Muslim League accepted the Mission's plan on June 6 to the surprise and relief of many. Soon negotiations began for the formation of an Interim Government and these proceeded simultaneously with clarifications of the long-term plan by the Cabinet Mission to the Congress leaders.

## Distinction

Maulana Azad wrote to the Viceroy on June 14 regretting that the Congress view-point on the grouping formula in the Mission's plan had not been accepted by the Cabinet delegation in their statement of May 25.

The Viceroy wrote back the next day: "The Delegation and I are aware of your objections to the principle of grouping. I would however point out that the statement of May 16 does not make grouping compulsory. It leaves the decision to the elected representatives of the Provinces concerned sitting together in sections. The only provision which is made is that the representatives of certain Provinces should meet in sections so that they can decide whether or not they wish to form groups. Even when this has been done the individual Provinces are still to have the liberty to opt out of the group if they so decide."

The Viceroy was clearly drawing a distinction between the Provinces sitting together in sections and forming groups. The first was mandatory under the Mission's plan, but whether a province should remain a member of the group or not was purely optional since it had the right under the Mission's plan to opt out by vote of its Legislature after the first general election under the new Constitution. There really was no contradiction in the Mission's Statement of May 16.

## Grouping

On June 25 the Congress Working Committee passed a resolution agreeing to participate in the work of the Constituent Assembly. The Resolution said: "The limitation of the Central authority, as contained in the proposals as well as the system of grouping Provinces weakened the whole structure and was unfair to some Provinces, such as the North-West Frontier Province, and Assam and to some of the minorities, notably the Sikhs. The Committee disapproved of this."

"They felt, however, taking the proposals as a whole, that there was sufficient scope for enlarging and strengthening for Central authority and for ensuring the right of a province to act accord-

ing to its choice in regard to grouping, and to give protection to such minorities as might otherwise be placed at a disadvantage."

How the Congress Working Committee was persuaded to accept the Cabinet Mission's plan is narrated in detail in Mr Pyarelal's memoirs and in Mr Sudhir Ghosh's memoirs.

Having regard to its interpretation of the grouping provisions of the proposals, the Congress leaders felt that the greatest obstacle to their acceptance of the Mission Plan was the declaration which each candidate for election to the Constituent Assembly had to sign to the effect that he was willing to serve as a representative of the Province "for the purposes of paragraph 19 of the Statement," which outlined the procedure making obligatory for a province initially to sit in a section and only later to opt out of the group set up by the section.

The Cabinet Mission, having secured the League's acceptance as well as the Congress as well as the Mission and Sardar Patel, Sir Stafford Cripps offered to amend the declaration by substituting the words "for the purposes of the declaration of May 16" in place of "for the purposes of paragraph 19 of the Declaration of May 16."

From Pyarelal's account it would seem that one of the members of the Mission, Lord Pethick-Lawrence, thought that Sir Stafford was going too far and said, "No, that presents difficulty." However, Sir Stafford Cripps seems to have prevailed and the Congress Working Committee proceeded to pass a Resolution of acceptance on June 25.

The Cabinet Mission's amendment of the Declaration, designed so clearly to accommodate the Congress's ambiguous stand, was due to its enthusiasm to get the Congress to accept the plan; for, the Mission had earlier consistently rejected the Congress interpretation and, indeed, later again did likewise.

## Interpretation

The same day, June 25, the Muslim League Working Committee passed a resolution commenting on the letter of the Congress President to the Viceroy and the Cabinet Delegation, intimating the Congress decision with regard to the proposals.

The League Working Committee contested the Congress's right to adhere to its interpretation of the Mission's proposals, which was rejected by the Cabinet Delegation, and yet to profess to accept the Cabinet Mission's plan. Indeed, the Viceroy himself in his letter of June 27, in reply to the Congress President, referred to the Congress's reiteration of its interpretation and pointed out "the procedure for dividing up into sections can only be altered by a resolution of the Constituent Assembly passed by a majority of both communities under paragraph 19(7) of the Statement of May 16."

The Congress, while accepting the Mission's long-term plan rejected the Mission's proposals of June 16 for an Interim Government, which the Muslim League accepted.

The Mission, however, felt that since both sides had accepted the long-term proposals, there was no point in going ahead with the

formation of the Interim Government had decided to scrap its proposals of June 16 and make a fresh attempt at the formation of an Interim Government.

Mr Jinnah was very sore about this decision and accused the Mission of breach of faith. In his statement of June 27 he took strong exception, once again, to the Congress adherence to its own interpretation of the grouping formula, while accepting the Mission's proposals and said "if they persisted in this and adopt measures to set at naught what is described by the Statement of May 25 to constitute the essential feature of the scheme, the whole plan will be wrecked at its very inception."

It is clear in the light of the foregoing that the Congress acceptance of the Cabinet Mission's proposals was a conditional one and that Mr Jinnah had publicly committed himself to it. It is necessary to stress this because, later the League spread the tale that the Cabinet Mission's acceptance of the Congress

by A. G. Noorani

ended his statement by saying that the decision would have to be taken by the Working Committee and the Council of the All India Muslim League.

The Congress Working Committee passed a Resolution on May 24, in which among other things, it reiterated its interpretation of the grouping provisions put forth earlier in Maulana Azad's letter dated May 20, 1946, "in order to retain the recommendatory character of the Statement, and in order to make the clauses consistent with each other, the Committee read paragraph 15 to mean that, in the first instance, the respective provinces will make their choice whether or not to belong to the section in which they are placed. Thus the Constituent Assembly must be considered as a sovereign body with final authority for the purpose of drawing up a constitution and giving effect to it."

The Cabinet Mission issued a statement on May 25, 1946, dealing with the criticisms made by both sides. On the question of grouping which was to assume such critical significance later, the Mission said, "The interpretation put by the Congress resolution on paragraph 15 of the statement, to the effect that the Provinces can in the first instance make the choice whether or not to belong to the Section in which they are placed, does not accord with the Delegation's intentions."

## Negotiations

"The reasons for the grouping of the Provinces are well known and this is an essential feature of the scheme and can only be modified by agreement between the parties. The right to opt out of the groups after the constitution making has been completed will be exercised by the people themselves since at the first election under the new provincial Constitution this question of opting out will obviously be a major issue, and all those entitled to vote under the new franchise will be able to take their share in a truly democratic decision."



MOUNTBATTEN'S greatest

after the new Constitutional arrangements have come into operation and the first general elections have been held."

The Viceroy was also of the opinion that it would be best not to convene the Constituent Assembly until this point was settled. The Declaration, however, was not accepted. Mr. Nehru's reply was that the Congress was prepared to abide by the verdict of the Federal Court on the dispute as to the interpretation of the clause relating to the grouping. The British Government overruled the Viceroy on the summoning of the Constituent Assembly and suggested that in the event of no agreement being reached on the grouping formula, Mr. Nehru, Mr. Jinnah, and Mr. Jinnah, along with the Viceroy, might be invited to discuss the question of partition.

### Overruled

Thus, there was a deadlock between the Muslim League and the Congress with regard to the grouping of provinces. Subsequently the Viceroy started negotiations with Mr. Jinnah for the League's participation in the Interim Government which were concluded successfully on the basis of the terms outlined in the Viceroy's letter to Mr. Jinnah dated October 4, 1946. One of the terms was the Muslim League's acceptance of the Mission's proposals of May 16.

Shortly after the Muslim League entered the Interim Government, the Viceroy took up with Mr. Jinnah the question of summoning the League Council for that purpose. Mr. Jinnah, in reply, contended that the Congress had not yet accepted the Cabinet Mission's proposals and that, therefore, there was no question of his convening the League Council. He also asked the Viceroy not to convene the Constituent Assembly.

On November 20, the Viceroy overruled Mr. Jinnah's objections and issued invitations for the meeting of the Constituent Assembly. He also sent for Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan, the senior-most Muslim League member of the Interim Government, and told him that he could not agree to the representatives of the League remaining in the Government unless the Muslim League accepted the Mission's proposals.

Predictably Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan took the stand that the proposals had not in fact been accepted by the Congress and, therefore, it was for the Viceroy to secure the Congress acceptance first. Meanwhile, the Congress took up the stand

qualified acceptance and called upon the British Government to dissolve the Constituent Assembly.

The Constituent Assembly, as a matter of fact had met on December 9, and had proceeded to frame certain rules to which the League's Working Committee's resolution took great exception. One of them was Rule 63, whereby the League argued, it was sought to assume control of the sections. The deadlock remained and a final break-up between the Congress and the League appeared inevitable. Once again, the Congress members demanded resignation of the League members from the Interim Government.

Once again, on the Viceroy's demand that the League accept the plan, the League rejoined that the Congress itself had not accepted the plan and, therefore, was in no position to call upon the League to do so. As a way out of the deadlock the Viceroy proposed to the Secretary of State that the British Government should issue a Statement calling upon the Congress "to confirm that the relevant passage in its resolution dealing with sections and grouping which have given rise to the Muslim League's doubts were not intended to limit or qualify the Congress acceptance of the Cabinet Mission's plan."

### No agreement

The Secretary of State did not agree with this suggestion very soon the Congress representatives declared that if the Muslim League's representatives were not asked to resign, the Congress representatives themselves would.

This presented the British Government with a veritable dilemma, and it got out of it by issuing the famous Statement of February 20, 1947, announcing its definite intention to take necessary steps to effect the peaceful transfer of power into responsible Indian hands by a date not later than June 30, 1948.

If it should appear that by then that an agreed Constitution had not been worked out, the British Government would consider to whom it should transfer the powers of the Central Government "whether as a whole to some form of Central Government for British India or in some areas to the existing provincial Governments or in such a way as may seem most reasonable and in the best interests of the Indian people."

The Congress Working Committee welcomed this Declaration in a resolution passed on March 8, The



# Rift between Congress and Muslim League

**T**HE Congress Working Committee's resolution was ratified by the All India Congress Committee on July 6, 1946. At this session Mr Nehru took over the Congress Presidentship from Maulana Azad. Speaking at a press conference thereafter, Mr Nehru stressed that the Constituent Assembly was a sovereign body and that in all probability there would be no groups at all. The non-Pakistan Provinces (Section A) would decide against grouping and so would the North West Frontier Province and Assam leading to the collapse of the other groups as well.

To be sure, Mr Jinnah raised an uproar about this statement. Later in the month, Lord Pethick-Lawrence in the House of Lords and Sir Stafford Cripps in the Commons repeated the Cabinet Mission's interpretation of the grouping formula and rejected the Congress interpretation. However, Mr Jinnah had the Council of the

## Why Cabinet Mission's plan failed—III

that the Muslim League should either accept the Cabinet Mission's plan or leave the Interim Government. To resolve this deadlock the British Government invited representatives of both parties to London for consultations.

The upshot was the British Government's statement of December 6 in which the British Government urged the Congress to accept the Cabinet Mission's interpretation. The last paragraph of the Statement was very significant: "There has never been any prospect of success for the Constituent Assembly except upon the basis of the agreed procedure. Should a Constitution come to be framed by the Constituent Assembly in which a large section of the Indian population had not been represented, His Majesty's Government could not, of course, contemplate forcing such a Constitution upon any unwilling parts of the country."

In retrospect, this was nothing but a recall of the alternative of the smaller Pakistan which, as we have noted, the Mission had put to Mr Jinnah in May 1946. What was now happening was that, thanks to the Congress' insistence on its own interpretation of the grouping formula, the possibility of partition, which had hitherto been relegated to the background, was now being revived.

Mr Nehru criticised this Statement of December 6 as a variation of the Mission's proposals. The Congress Working Committee in its Resolution of December 22 criticised this Statement of December 6, expressed its readiness to abide by

Working Committee also passed on that date two other resolutions one calling for the partition of Punjab and Bengal on communal lines, and the other inviting the Muslim League to direct negotiations.

That the British Government did not regard the AICC's resolution of January 6 as an acceptance of its interpretation is evident from the fact that as late as March 1947, Sir Stafford Cripps asked Mr Sudhir Ghosh to persuade the Congress "to tell the world quite bluntly and in detail what they really mean when they say they accept the British interpretation of the Cabinet Mission plan as set out in the statement of December 6."

As Mr Sudhir Ghosh reported to Sardar Patel, the British Government thought that Mr Jinnah "will soon realise that the Pakistan he is likely to get is not worth anything; if on top of this realisation in Mr Jinnah's mind the Congress is in a position to say in detail what is meant by its acceptance of the British interpretation of the Plan, then it will be possible for them to give Mountbatten such instructions and directions as would enable him to get the Muslim League into the Constituent Assembly."

## Mountbatten's role

Lord Mountbatten succeeded Lord Wavell as Viceroy of India. The directive he was given by the British Government was to secure implementation of the Cabinet Mission's plan. Maulana Azad was also anxious that the new Viceroy do something to this end. He suggested that Mountbatten issue his personal interpretation on the grouping formula which would be acceptable.

Indeed, at a staff meeting of the Viceroy on April 12, 1947, Mountbatten went to the root of the dilemma, and put the proposition that he should try to get Congress to accept the Cabinet Mission's plan in full, and then confront Mr Jinnah with giving in or accepting a truncated Pakistan.

The Viceroy was trying various alternatives. On April 19 the Viceroy felt that Pakistan was inevitable but three days later he came round to the view "that the Cabinet Mission Plan can somehow be resurrected in a new form and name. As originally presented, it was psychologically wrong. If the principle of two sovereign States could be accepted, union might be achieved through sovereignty. However, as the Viceroy put it, "my object is to create the effect of two sovereign States or separate blocks negotiating at the Centre rather than having a system of majority voting." This was nothing but Mr Jinnah's old proposal for confederation which he presented to the Cabinet Mission in May 1946.

But by now the rift between the Congress and the League seemed unbridgeable. On April 20 Mr Nehru said that the Muslim League could have its Pakistan if it wanted, but it had no right to demand to be included within it areas which did not wish to join Pakistan. The Cabinet Mission's Plan was dead. Partitioning India was only a matter of time.

## NEXT WEEK: Partition

in bitterness.

## by A. G. Noorani

All India Muslim League convened in Bombay on July 27. The Council withdrew its acceptance of the Cabinet Mission's proposals and passed another resolution authorising its Working Committee to draw up a plan of "direct action."

The Congress Working Committee met in Wardha in August 1946 and passed a resolution seeking to allay the Muslim League's misgivings. The effort was a futile one in view of what the Working Committee said: "The Committee wish to make it clear that while they do not approve of all the proposals contained in this Statement (May 16) they accepted the scheme in its entirety. They interpreted it so as to resolve the inconsistencies contained in it and fill the omissions in accordance with the principles laid down in the Statement." The Nehru "outburst" was thus ratified.

It is not necessary for us to go into the details of the negotiations leading to the formation of the Interim Government and the League's later participation in it. Our main purpose here is to trace the parties' differences regarding the principal question arising out of the Mission's proposals, namely, the grouping of Provinces.

Soon after making the announcement that an Interim Government would be formed by the Congress alone, the Viceroy visited Calcutta to acquaint himself with the violence that erupted on the "direct action" day, August 16. While in Calcutta Lord Wavell met Sir Khwaja Nazimuddin, an eminent Muslim League leader, who suggested that if the Congress could yet unequivocally accept the grouping formula, and the British Government and their Viceroy declared that no other interpretation would be countenanced save the one authoritatively put forth by the Mission, the Muslim League might retract its resolution withdrawing its earlier acceptance of the Mission's plan.

He also made a suggestion regarding the League's participation in the Interim Government which is not material for the purpose of this article. The Viceroy was much impressed by Mr Nazimuddin's suggestion and on his return he handed over to Mr Gandhi and Mr Nehru the draft of a declaration which he wished the Congress to accept.

The Declaration read: "The Congress are prepared in the interests of communal harmony to accept the intention of the Statement of May 16, that Provinces cannot exercise any option affecting their membership of the sections or of the groups if formed, until the decision contemplated in paragraph 12 of the Statement of May 16 1946) of the new Legislature



Jawaharlal Nehru

the verdict of the Federal Court and decided to refer the matter to the AICC. This body met in Delhi and passed a resolution on January 6, 1947, advising action in accordance with the interpretation of the British Government.

But it added "it must be clearly understood, however, that this must not involve any compulsion of a Province and that the rights of the Sikhs in the Punjab should not be jeopardised. In the event of any attempt at such compulsion, a Province or a part of Province has the right to take such action as may be deemed necessary in order to give effect to the wishes of the people concerned." The Muslim League Working Committee, which met in Karachi at the end of the month, regarded this as yet another







# Partition in bitterness

IT is clear from the resume of events that the persistent unequivocal refusal of the Congress to accept the grouping provisions of the Cabinet Mission's plan led to its collapse. Repeated British efforts which continued till as late as March 1947, to get an unambiguous acceptance from the Congress failed miserably. Each time there was the same acceptance hedged in with a proviso or expressed subject to its interpretation, and with the right to interpret the document in its own way. Willingness to refer the issue to the Federal Court was of little avail since the grouping provisions were an essential part of the bargain with the League. Indeed the only concession to it.

The reason for this reservation lay in the Congress's unrealistic and extreme concept of an all-India federation. Maulana Azad alone was prepared to accept a relatively weak Centre, but he was unable to carry his colleagues with him. There was Mahatma Gan-

by A. G. Noorani

dhi's strong opposition. "In face of Gandhiji's opposition, the Congress leaders did not dare to accept the May 16 plan, but neither did they want to reject it. So they put their own interpretation on grouping by taking recourse to two conflicting clauses of the May 16 plan." Of course, there really was no conflict in the provisions as was repeatedly pointed out.

The main reason for Gandhiji's opposition, and while the Congress leaders shared was the fear that the Plan would pave the way to Pakistan. Sardar Patel, writes his biographer, "was convinced that it would set India on the slippery slope of fragmentation." The very fact that the League saw in the Plan the "basis and the foundation of Pakistan" and pointed them out to its adherents, in justification for its acceptance of a federal India despite years of agitation for Pakistan, was ground good enough for the Congress to disapprove the Plan. The pity of it is that the rejection of the Plan, which in effect it was, was based on a total misappreciation of the document. Thus, we are told Sardar Patel thought that the two groups comprising the Pakistan provinces would probably exercise their option of seceding from the Union.

## Why the Cabinet Mission's plan failed—IV

This option the groups were manifestly not granted by the Mission's Plan.

In contrast to the clear right (part 19 (viii) of "any Province to elect to come out of any group in which it has been placed" all it could do vis-a-vis the Union was para 15(6) to "call for a reconsideration of the terms of the Constitution after an initial period of 10 years and at 10 yearly intervals thereafter." Significantly Mr. Jinnah publicly complained, on May 22, that "our proposal that the Pakistan group should have the right to secede from the Union after the initial period of ten years, although the Congress had no serious objection to it, has been omitted and now we are only limited to reconsideration of the terms of Union Constitution after the initial period of ten years." It is worth recalling in this context that while the Cripps proposals of March 1942 envisaged a federation, they provided expressly for "non-accessing Provinces." The Cabinet Mission's proposals, in contrast, did not.

It was this which emboldened Maulana Azad triumphantly to conclude that as a result of the Cabinet Mission's Plan "all schemes of partition of India have been rejected once and for all." As Mr. Lele, himself a Congressman, asked: "Could a triumph like this come without a price without some sacrifice?" The price of a grouping of Muslim Provinces the Congress was unwilling to pay. It was a singularly short-sighted and unimaginative decision. Once a federation had been set up, it would have inevitably gathered strength. We have seen, moreover, that earlier in the day Mr. Jinnah was offered the choice between "truncated" Pakistan and a federation with limited powers. That later he accepted the federation and publicly characterised it as the greatest success of the Muslim League's agitation shows his preference.

But if the Congress's policies made partition an inevitability, it was the League's distrust and lack of statesmanship which ensured that

partition came in an embittered atmosphere.

On March 8, 1947, the Congress Working Committee passed three important resolutions. One, welcoming the British Government's Statement of February 20, another demanding partition of the Punjab and Bengal on religious lines. The third, curiously enough, had gone largely unnoticed in the memoirs and chronicles of the period. It read thus: "In view of new developments which are leading to a swift transfer of power in India, it has become incumbent on the people of India to prepare themselves jointly and co-operatively for this change so that this may be effected peacefully and to the advantage of all. The working committee therefore invite the All-India Muslim League to nominate representatives to meet representatives of the Congress in order to consider the situation that has arisen and to devise means to meet it."

Mr. Jinnah had always maintained that negotiations with the Congress were possible if the principle of partition was first accepted. The logical corollary of the partition of the Punjab and Bengal was the partition of India on the same, that is religious, basis.

## Not interested

It would have been natural to expect Mr. Jinnah to respond positively to the Congress resolutions. Hopes were raised when on March 27 he called for a "truce on the basis of Pakistan, the elimination of the British in India and India for Indians." But before long Mr. Nehru complained of the absence of any response from the League to the Congress invitation. A spokesman of that body, in reply, claimed that the League had enquired of the Congress the basis for the proposed negotiations. Refuting the claim, Mr. Shankarrao Deo, General Secretary of the Congress, published the correspondence exchanged between him and Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan, General Secretary of the Muslim League. It appears that on March 9 Mr. Deo forwarded the Congress Executive's resolutions drawing pointed attention to the invitation. Four days later Mr. Khan replied to say that the letter would be placed before the Working Committee of the League for their consideration. On April 11, Mr. Deo sent a reminder requesting "you expedite your decision." On April 14, Mr. Khan replied: "No date for the next meeting of the Working Committee of All-India Muslim League has been fixed yet. In view of the discussions which are now in progress between the Viceroy and the Indian leaders, it is not likely that a meeting of the Working Committee will be called until a definite stage in the talks has been reached." Since such a stage is reached only on the conclusion of the negotiations, the only and fair inference to draw from the letter is that the League was not a bit interested in direct negotiations with the Congress.



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# In 1947, on the eve of In

At a time when the people of East Bengal are locked in a grim and heroic struggle with their military oppressors from West Pakistan, it is interesting to recall the strenuous efforts made by leaders of both the communities in undivided Bengal in 1947 to preserve the unity of the province, and how these efforts failed.

In an engrossing two-part article, our well-known commentator looks back on a forgotten chapter of history and makes interesting revelations about negotiations involving national leaders who wanted a united Bengal as a separate state.

This is the first part of the feature . . .

by A. G.

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wake of the trauma that has been itself in East a few, both in India, have the fear that

a harmful effect at it might engender a movement in a step towards the United Bengal.

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1947, the British announced its power to In- ne 30, 1948, whole to some Government or in some areas Provincial Govern- such other way as reasonable . . . not only the parti- but that of the particularly of the

Punjab and Bengal.

Indeed, on March 8 the Congress Working Committee, while welcoming the British Government's declaration, asked for a partition of the Punjab on a communal basis. But, curiously enough, it was silent on Bengal.

Five days later, the Chief Minister of Bengal, Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy, said "Whatever may be the form of the future Constitution, I certainly visualise that the province of Bengal will attain an independent status."

He even hinted at the immediate formation of an all-Party Government to replace the League Ministry which he headed. But nothing came of it.

He was, it may be said at the outset, widely and deservedly distrusted by his own Party men as well as by his opponents. It was to cost him a lot.

The executive of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee now (April 4) stepped in to fill the gap in the Working Committee's resolution by demanding a partition of Bengal as well.

Undeterred, Mr. Suhrawardy pleaded (April 8) "Bengal together, one and united, could be a great nation. If divided, contempt by the rest of India would be their lot."

## Partition

The advocate of a two-nation theory seemed to be enlarging it into a three-nation doctrine.

On April 11, eleven members of the Central Legislature from Bengal reiterated the demand for its partition in a memorandum to the Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, who had just taken over from Lord Wavell.

The British Government's directive to the new Viceroy was to salvage the Cabinet Mission's Plan, if possible, and, failing that, to prepare for a division.

Accordingly he prepared an alternative plan of his own which envisaged transfer of power directly to the provinces and the partition of the Punjab and Bengal if so demanded by either of their two communal regions.

The Muslim League, while demanding a partition of India on a communal basis, was strongly opposed to a partition of these two provinces.

The Congress, on the other hand, while opposing the partition of the country, insisted that if it did come to pass, the principle and the process should be applied to Punjab and Bengal as well.

If this were done, they felt, it would bring the League to heel, other gains apart.

Mr. Hodson records, "Maulana Abul Kalam Azad had told the Viceroy that if he were to announce the partition of Bengal it was highly likely that the Muslims of Bengal would separate from the League; he thought it was possible, though slightly less likely, that the same would happen in the Punjab."

"Sardar Patel made the same prognostication, adding that Mr. Jinnah would be forced to come to terms, or else be overthrown by the League."

On April 26, when he met the Viceroy, Mr. Suhrawardy began in earnest his efforts to ward off the partition.

Given time, he would persuade both, the Hindus as well as his own leader, Mr. Jinnah, that a united Bengal was in the best interests of all.

## Different

Mr. Hodson recounts: "This is very good news," said Lord Mountbatten. The same day he saw Mr. Jinnah and reported his conversation with the Bengali Premier.

What did Mr. Jinnah think, asked the Viceroy, about keeping Bengal united at the price of its staying out of Pakistan?

Without hesitation Mr. Jinnah replied: "I SHOULD BE DELIGHTED. WHAT IS THE USE OF BENGAL WITHOUT CALCUTTA? THEY HAD MUCH BETTER REMAIN UNITED AND INDEPENDENT. I AM SURE THEY WOULD BE ON FRIENDLY TERMS WITH PAKISTAN." (EMPHASIS MINE THROUGHOUT). A COMMENT MOST REVEALING, INDEED.

But the Viceroy heard a different story from Mr. Kisan Shankar Roy, Leader of the Opposition in the Bengal Assembly.

## Purpose

However, when Lord Mountbatten told him that he had advised Mr. Suhrawardy to offer joint electorates in place of the existing separate communal electorates, he reacted instantly.

"MOST CERTAINLY THAT WOULD SATISFY THE HINDUS. IF THEY GIVE US THAT YOU CAN PRACTICALLY COUNT ON UNITY."

Mr. Suhrawardy went into action immediately on his return to Calcutta from Delhi on April 28 after his talks with the Viceroy.

He contacted Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose and arranged a meeting in which, besides the two, Khwaja Nazimuddin, ex-Chief Minister of the province and Deputy Leader of the League in the Central Legislative Assembly, Mr.



Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy, Minister of Bengal in 1947. Partition he averred, that the province of Bengal was dependent

Abul Hashem, General Secretary of the provincial League, and Mr. Fazlur Rahman, the Revenue Minister, participated.

It appears that Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose placed certain proposals before the meeting as a basis for discussion.

The following day, another meeting was held between him on the one hand and a sub-committee of the League, set-up for this purpose, on the other.

They adjourned for the next day when Mr. Kisan Shankar Roy joined the discussions.

At this stage the League spokesmen Mr. Suhrawardy and Mr. Rahman, decided to seek Mr. Jinnah's reactions.

They had made it clear to their interlocutors that any agreement that they might reach was subject to approval by the League High Command.

For his part, Sarat Bose took the issue to Gandhi. In the end he was joined by a veteran Congressman, Akhil Chandra Dutta.



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Gandhiji:

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"I certainly visualise  
Bengal will attain an in-  
dependent status."

wrote a moving letter to  
Gandhi:

"It was my lot in the prime  
of my life to fight against the  
partition of Bengal, proposed by  
Lord Curzon. By an irony of fate  
I have to fight now in the eve-  
ning of my life against partition  
sponsored by my own people.

"I request you to express your  
views and give a correct lead  
before further mischief is done."

On May 10 Sarat Bose took  
Mr. Abul Hashem to Sodepur Ash-  
ram for talks with Gandhi.

Mr. Hashem built his case for  
a United Bengal on the "com-  
mon language, common culture  
and common history that united  
the Hindus and Muslims of Ben-  
gal alike," neither of whom wish-  
ed to be ruled by "Pakistanis who  
lived a thousand miles away."

## Comment

Gandhi put a couple of sear-  
ching questions. What if Pakistan  
offered a "voluntary federation"  
based on a common religion?

Alternatively, if culture be the  
bond, Bengal's culture is derived  
"from the priceless heirloom of  
all India." What had he, then,  
to say of a "voluntary associa-  
tion" between Bengal and the rest  
of India?

Mr. Hashem's silences drew  
from Gandhi this perceptive  
comment. "You have not really  
made up your mind about Pak-  
istan. Please think about it once  
more, and then we shall discuss  
the new proposal."

The next day Mr. Suhrawardy  
himself entered the lion's den  
accompanied by Mr. Hashem and  
Mr. Mohammed Ali Bogra but  
his discussion with Gandhi hover-  
ed on the periphery and did not  
touch the core of the matter.

He returned on May 12 to plead  
again but made little headway.

## Consent

Apparently, news of these  
pourparlers had got around.  
An agitated Dr. Shyama Prasad  
Mookerjee, then a leader of the  
Hindu Mahasabha, called on Gan-  
dhi on May 13 to verify if  
he had, indeed, blessed the Uni-  
ted Bengal project.

It was sponsored by British  
commercial interests, the Doctor  
warned, and the Viceroy himself  
had commended it to him.

"So your objection is on ac-  
count of its parentage! No, I want  
you to criticise the scheme on  
merits," Gandhi twitted him.

Dr. Mookerjee was well pre-  
pared for this. What if Bengal  
joined Pakistan later? he asked.

Gandhi pointed out that Mr.  
Suhrawardy had spoken of "mu-  
tual consent" between Hindus and  
Muslims as the governing factor  
in the formation of a separate  
Bengal.

That expression meant "a ma-  
jority of Hindu members and a  
majority of Muslim members" ag-  
reeing to the same thing, whe-  
ther it is the initial establishment  
of the State or its later affiliation  
with India or Pakistan.

"But can you contemplate Ben-  
gal lying separate from the rest  
of India?" the Doctor asked.

Prof. N. K. Bose records, "Gan-  
dhi replied with emotion  
"You ask me that question?"  
But he had in mind a larger

issue. "An admission that Bengal  
Hindus and Benal Mussulmans  
were one would really be a se-  
vere blow against the two-nation  
theory of the League.

"If therefore Mr. Suhrawardy  
was prepared to accept the real  
meaning of the term 'mutual con-  
sent,' then it would mean either  
the end of the League or of Mr.  
Suhrawardy."

He asked Dr. Mookerjee to ac-  
cept Mr. Suhrawardy's bona fides.

## Sovereign

By this time (May 15) Mr.  
Suhrawardy had travelled quite  
some distance from the two-na-  
tion theory. After citing factors  
such as common language, he  
said:

"There has been no finality  
even among eminent professors of  
politics on the question of what  
constitutes a nation and differ-  
ent criteria would furnish different  
answers.

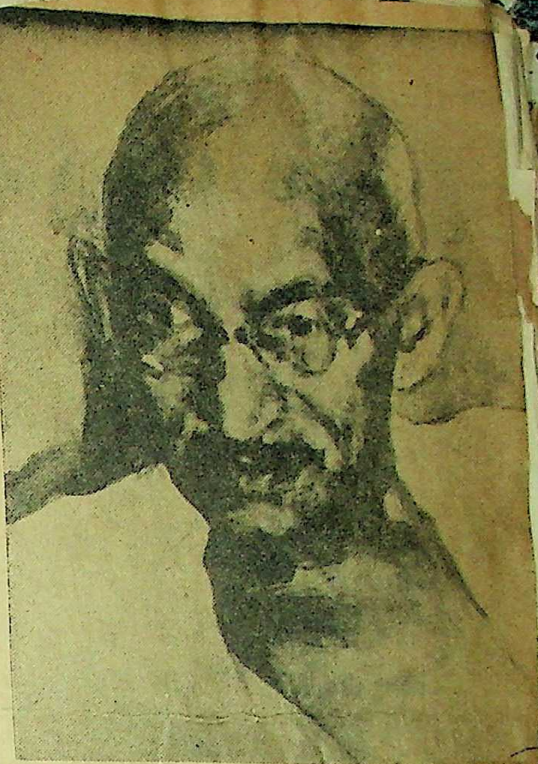
"Therefore, the two-nation, the-  
ory should be fully capable  
of being suitably moulded so as  
to be adaptable to local condi-  
tions as the situation demands."

His negotiations had made suf-  
ficient progress to produce the  
following draft terms which Mr.  
Fazlur Rehman released to the  
press at Calcutta on May 18:

- (1) Bengal to be a sovereign So-  
cialist Republic. The Socialist  
Republic of Bengal will decide  
its relations with the rest of  
India.
- (2) The Bengal Legislature, after  
the constitution is framed and  
put into force, should be elec-  
ted on the basis of adult  
franchise and joint electorate  
etc.

## Power

- (3) On para 1 and 2 being ac-  
cepted by both parties and on  
Bengal being declared by His  
Majesty's Government as an  
independent state, the present  
Ministry will be dissolved and  
an Interim Government will be  
formed consisting of equal num-  
bers of Muslims and Hindus  
(including the scheduled caste  
Hindus) but excluding the Chief  
Minister who will be a Mus-  
lim. The Home Minister shall  
be a Hindu.
- (4) The Interim Government will  
give Hindus, including Schedul-  
ed Castes, and Muslims equal  
share in the services.
- (5) The British Government shall  
transfer power to the Interim



Gandhi gave a correct lead to leaders from  
Bengal who sought his advice on the United  
Bengal idea.



Sarat Chandra Bose, here seen with his wife,  
met Mr. Suhrawardy and others to discuss the  
possibility of a United Bengal. He later placed  
the issue before Gandhi.

Government on or before June  
1948.

(6) An ad hoc constitution-mak-  
ing body consisting of 30 per-

sons, 15 Muslims and 14 Hin-  
dus will be set up by the Min-  
istry and the Congress respec-  
tively to frame a constitution.

NEXT WEEK: How Pandit Nehru killed, in  
the nick of time, the Viceroy's plan of trans-  
ferring authority directly to the province—a  
plan which would have Balkanised India.



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**TWENTY-THREE** years after the birth of Pakistan, whose main author he was, and twenty-three years after his own death, Mahomed Ali Jinnah came for a historical reassessment.

That this man, who was hailed for the major part of his political career as an ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity should have sternly turned his face against that unity and carved out a separate state for the Muslims in the last years of his life is one of the greatest ironies of Indian history.

It was also the greatest irony of his own brilliant record.

It is well-known that Jinnah did not father the idea of Pakistan. Not only that, but for many years after it was mooted by Chaudhary Rahmat Ali, and for a time after it was espoused by no less a person than Sir Muhammad Iqbal, Jinnah was distinctly opposed towards it.

### Phase

He was even known to have privately made fun of it.

The happenings at the Round Table Conference (1930-31) had disgusted and disillusioned him that he washed his hands of Indian politics and decided to go down in London for good.

It was only the earnest solicitations of Liaquat Ali Khan that persuaded him to return to India to take over the leadership of the Muslim League.

But even then he had not dreamed of assuming the role as the spokesman of the Muslims or even Quaid-i-Azam (That appellation was later popularised by Mahatma Gandhi himself.)

Indeed, so uncertain and unlikely to play on his return to India that one evening at the Willingdon Club in Bombay he confessed to Diwan Chamanlal "Politics! I am finished!"

But constituted as he was, Jinnah was not a man who could be so lightly finished.

Indeed, it could even be said that all that happened subsequently in Indian politics was a demonstration of the axiom that Jinnah could never be finished either by the toadies and sycophants or by the keys in his own community. The leaders of the Congress, the Viceroy and Secretaries of State of Britain.

Far from being anxious to finish him, the last, on their part, regarded him as a counterpoise to the Congress.

### Responsibility

"Impossible" was not a word found in Napoleon's dictionary. It was "finished" ever to Jinnah's career.

He went from strength to strength unbending and unflinching playing a consummate game utilising every wrong move of his opponents to his own advantage. Haughty, aloof and arrogant, his monocle gaze fixed on the horizon of Pakistan.

Within a decade he had created it by the sheer force of his personality, nay conjured it into the Congress cap. History has no parallel to such an achievement. It is not my purpose here to discuss the political development of the establishment or, much less, to



# Jinnah - facts in perspective



Mahomed Ali Jinnah,  
the main author of  
Pakistan.

**TWENTY-THREE** years after the birth of Pakistan, whose main author he was, and twenty-two years after his own death, Mahomed Ali Jinnah calls for a historical reassessment.

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It is well-known that Jinnah did not father the idea of Pakistan. Not only that, but for many years after it was mooted by Chaudhary Rahmat Ali, and for a long time after it was espoused by no less a person than Sir Muhammad Iqbal, Jinnah was distinctly cool towards it.

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But even then he had not dreamt of assuming the role as the Messiah of the Muslims or even as Qaid-i-Azam (That appellation was later popularised by Mahatma Gandhi himself.)

Indeed, so uncertain and unsure Jinnah was of the role he was likely to play on his return in India that one evening at the Willingdon Club in Bombay he confessed to Diwan Chaman Lal: "Politics! I am finished!"

But constituted as he was Jinnah was not a man who could be so lightly finished.

Indeed, it could even be said that all that happened subsequently in Indian politics was a demonstration of the axiom that Jinnah could never be finished — either by the toadies and flunkies in his own community or by the leaders of the Congress or by the Viceroy and Secretaries of State of Britain.

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"Impossible" was not a word found in Napoleon's dictionary. Nor was "finished" ever to be a phrase in Jinnah's career.

He went from strength to strength unbending and unyielding, playing a consummate hand, utilising every wrong move of his opponents to his own advantage, haughty, aloof and arrogant, his monocle gaze fixed on the goal of Pakistan.

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by N. G. Jog

acted as the leader of the Muslim delegates and, significantly, Jinnah was not even invited to the third conference.

It was not surprising that momentarily he considered himself to be "finished."

Brooding in his West Heath House in London, the egoist in Jinnah must have realised that if he was to resume his political career in India it could only be as the avowed spokesman of the Muslims.

He could no longer retain his pre-eminent position as a nationalist or, much less, as an ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity. He had finally to bury his dream of being a "Muslim Gokhale."

A chance reading of H. C. Armstrong's biography of Kamal Atatürk Grey Wolf, An Intimate Study of A Dictator seems to have influenced Jinnah about this time.

Had he himself not always been a lone wolf — with his marital tragedy and with no intimate friend to unburden his mind? When Jinnah finally returned to India he was a changed man, nay, a new man.

It is not clear whether he came committed to the two-nation ideology but henceforth he talked only as a spokesman of the Muslims — which, in sooth, he became owing to a concatenation of circumstances.

## Tool

First was his own outstanding and upright character among a host of Muslim loyalists and self-seekers. His integrity was unquestioned. Honesty was not a policy but an obsession with him.

His very hauteur and arrogance he turned into instruments of power. He was never a man of the masses and he spurned to play to the gallery.

But he overwhelmed the Muslim masses with his sheer personality and they heard him respectfully though few of them could understand his flawlessly delivered English speeches.

In dress, language and mode of living he remained himself — the aristocrat — though his last few years he sometimes affected the shervani.

The second factor that favoured Jinnah was, as noted earlier, the anxiety of the British Government to find a counterpoise to Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress and to win the co-operation of at least a segment of the Indian people for the prosecution of the war.

The official partiality for the Muslims dates from the first decade of this century. They were meant to serve as a tool in British hands, a pawn in the game of divide et impera.

What distinguished Jinnah from other Muslim leaders was that he could become nobody's tool or pawn. He was prepared to go along with the British, but it could only be towards his own ends.

Thus while helping the Government to a certain extent to put down the Congress challenge of Quit India, he ultimately turned upon it and issued his ultimatum Divide And Quit!

## Firmness

The third factor that played into his hands was the Congress and its leaders. From the beginning they not only gave an un-

cloud-cuckoo-land of their own making, Jinnah stood firm and foursquare on the demand of Pakistan though till almost the last minute he did not know what exactly it was going to be.

Ultimately he had to accept "a truncated and moth-eaten Pakistan," but that he accepted it was itself the best tribute to his sense of stark realism. He knew that a psychological moment comes when the only alternative to "all" was "nothing!"

## Docile

But till then as a matter of tactics and strategy, he stood inflexibly for all that was implicit in the original plan of Pakistan: the whole of the Punjab and the North-West Frontier province, the whole of Bengal, Assam, the corridor — the lot. (Kashmir, of course, was to follow as a matter of course.)

He would bargain only on those terms whether with the Congress or the British Government.

If he treated the Congress leaders with calculated insolence, his behaviour with his own followers was no better.

The Muslim League Council was no more than an upper-form class of docile school-boys to him. He lectured to them and they listened and obeyed.

He refused any compromise with his followers just as he did with his opponents.

When one Leaguer dared to tell Jinnah that, as a concession to the masses, he should travel third-class as Gandhi did, he almost scorched him: "Don't dictate to me what I should or should not do. It is not your money that I am spending, and I shall live and act as I choose."

## Variety

Every step that he took in those years was a master-stroke of tactics. His call for the celebration of a "Deliverance Day" when the Congress ministries resigned in 1939 heralded the start of the Pakistan campaign which reached a fever pitch when the League session gave a call for "Direct Action" in 1946.

This was the last turning point for an ingrained constitutionalist like Jinnah but he did not flinch from it. "Now there is no room for compromise," he told his obedient followers.

If the carnage that followed that call — Muslims naturally got the worst of it — shocked and shook Jinnah, he did not betray it in the least. He was prepared to pay any price for Pakistan.

Long ago Sarojini Naidu had

observed that "the true criterion of Jinnah's greatness lies not in the range and variety of his knowledge and experience, not in the diversity of aims and the challenged length of a towering personality, but rather in a lofty singleness of purpose and the lasting charm of a character animated by a brave conception of duty."

Did Mrs. Naidu recall her own words in those days when Pakistan loomed over India like a spectre? — one wonders.

Jinnah's refusal to accept Lord Mountbatten as the first Governor-General of Pakistan (jointly in with India) has been bitterly criticised in Britain as much as in India.

## Worthy

But it was characteristic of the man. Pakistan would not be the entity he had envisaged without being himself as a visual symbol at its head. Had he not himself created it, he would not have created it.

But once Pakistan was achieved, the urbane, constitutionalist statesman Jinnah reassessed himself, moved over the fanatic almost rabid campaigner of the preceding few years.

In his very first address to the Pakistan Constituent Assembly he said to his people:

"You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship."

"You may belong to any religion, or caste or creed — that has nothing to do with the fundamentals of principles that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one state."

"Now, I think we should keep that in front of us as our ideal, and you will find that, in course of time, Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense because that is the personal faith of each individual but in the political sense as citizens of the State."

This was a speech worthy of a Nehru or a Gandhi, of a Washington or a Lincoln.



# Patel

SARDAR PATEL'S  
RESPONDENCE (1945-46)

—Volume 3: Edited by  
Durga Das. Published by  
Navajivan Publishing House,  
Ahmedabad-14. First  
published August 1972.  
LIV and 394. Price Rs. 10.00

SOON after his release from prison in 1945 as a result of an alliance in World War II, Lord Wavell's historic decision that Indian elections to the Central Legislative Assemblies will be held in November-December 1945 and 1946, Sardar Patel (then occupying the place in the Congress hierarchy just after Gandhiji) was appointed the head of Congress machinery to carry on negotiations with the Viceroy and the Cabinet Mission. This entailed a lengthy process that passed between the Central and Provincial political leaders, members of the visiting British Cabinet Ministers, various momentous events that were taking place on the political plane.

This correspondence of Sardar Patel has been released through the Navajivan Publishing House. Sardar Patel's daughter Miss Pateel. This correspondence when published in its entirety will undoubtedly be a valuable source for the historians of India as well as other interested persons who wish to follow the main political developments of that period (1945-50) in Indian history, which achieved real freedom, consolidated its territorial integrity, and well-knit whole under the guidance and sagacity of Sardar Patel.

As our readers are aware, this correspondence of Sardar Patel is now being edited by Mr. Durga Das. It is published in a series of volumes to be published by Navajivan Publishing House. We have already published these columns in the volumes of this series which had dealt with the 'Kashmir Question' and 'The Conduct of the Central and Provincial Assemblies'. The publishing firm has brought out the volume which is currently in view.

In this third volume covers over 400 pages. The Editor has collected 378 texts of Sardar Patel's correspondence for the period that preceded the transfer of power to Indian hands in August 1947, the British quit India, and formally, will recall that it was a momentous occasion for the people of India since it marked the period that the Central and Provincial Assemblies were formed. Indian provincial governments were established at the Central level. Sardar Patel saw the viceroy's Mission to India.



# Patel's correspondence II

**SARDAR PATEL'S CORRESPONDENCE (1945-50)**  
—Volume 3: Edited by Durga Das. Published by Navajivan Publishing House Ahmedabad-14. First Published August 1972. Pp. LIV and 394. Price Rs.25.

SOON after his premature release from prison in 1945 (as a result of an allied victory in World War II) and Lord Wavell's historic announcement that Indian general elections to the Central and Legislative Assemblies respectively will be held in November-December 1945 and early 1946, Sardar Patel (who was then occupying the third rank in the Congress hierarchy i.e., just after Gandhiji and Nehru) was appointed the head of the Congress machinery set-up to conduct the elections as well as to carry on negotiations with the Viceroy and the British Cabinet Mission. This position entailed a lengthy correspondence that passed between him and the Central and Provincial political leaders and the members of the visiting British Cabinet Ministers on the various momentous developments that were taking place on the political plane in India.

This correspondence of Sardar Patel has now been released through Navajivan Publishing House by Sardar Patel's daughter Miss Maniben Patel. This correspondence when published in its entirety will undoubtedly prove very valuable for the future historians of India as well as to other interested persons who wish to follow the trends of main political developments of that period (1945-50) in Indian history which saw India achieve real freedom and consolidate its territories into a well-knit whole under the wise counsel and sagacious guidance of Sardar Patel.

As our readers are already aware, this correspondence of Sardar Patel is now being edited by Mr. Durga Das and published in a series of ten volumes to be released by Navajivan Publishing House. We have already noticed in these columns the two earlier volumes of this valuable series which had dealt respectively with the 'Kashmir Problem' and 'The Conduct of Elections to Central and Provincial Assemblies'. This enterprising publishing firm has now brought out the third volume which is currently under review.

In this third volume (which covers over 400 pages) the Editor has collected to gather 378 texts of Sardar Patel's correspondence relating to the period that preceded the actual transfer of power to Indian hands in August 1947 when the British quitted India finally and formally. Our readers will recall that this period was a momentous one in the history of India since it was during this period that Congress Ministries were formed in several Indian provinces and an Interim Government was installed at the Centre with Pandit Nehru as its head. This period also saw the visit of a Cabinet Mission to India which

elects to the Central Legislative Assembly of the Congress in the general constituencies and of the Muslim League in the constituencies reserved for Muslims. Inevitably, Princely India also felt its repercussions.

"The burden of meeting the challenge fell on Sardar Patel first as the head of the Congress Parliamentary Board and later on as the Minister in the Interim Government in charge of Home Affairs and Indian States. The present volume reveals how the Sardar handled this complex situation and operated on four fronts—disciplining Congress Ministries in the States, countering the disruptionist moves of the League exposing the intrigues of British bureaucrats and guiding the movement for reforms in the Princely States."

A selection of some of the more important texts of Sardar Patel's correspondence that are included in this volume are given below. They go to show not only the command which Sardar Patel wielded on English language but also his wise and sagacious handling of Congressmen and affairs of his times and the stand that he took on the many important political and socio-economic problem that India faced at this momentous period of its history.

**Extracts from Sardar Patel's letter dated July 7, 1946 addressed to T. Prakasam of Madras who as Chief Minister failed to assert his right to be consulted by the Governor before the latter announced his nominations to Upper House:**

"The whole matter seems to me to be very badly handled when the Governor said that he would in his discretion like to propose seven out of the nine names, with a view to non-given representation to Congress persons. You should have protested immediately and asserted your claim to give advice regarding nomination which he was bound to accept, according to the convention."

"The Governor has no right to provide for representation to non-Congress persons. He has nothing to do with political parties. He is entitled to see that minority interests are represented, but to meddle with political interests and parties is beyond his scope."

"Apart from this, when India is soon going to be free, the Governor has to exercise his own discretion consistent with the coming freedom. When he read out seven names, then you should have said that you were going to propose all the names and that you were not going to accept his nominations. When the names were read out to you you must have seen that there were names of persons, who can never be accepted by the Congress. It was for you to raise your objection at that time. It was all a sad business and we can do nothing in the matter now as you say."

**Extracts from Sardar Patel's letter dated July 1946 addressed to Y.**

the Congress. He has always advocated acceptance of all the claims of the Muslim League without any question. He is able to accommodate himself with the Communist or perhaps he is a Communist and therefore, he had to leave the Servants of India Society. Amongst the Communists also there are many able men but a golden knife cannot be used for committing suicide."

**Extracts from Sardar Patel's letter dated August 16, 1946 addressed to Sri RC Reddy about Pandit Nehru:**

"Since the date on which you sent your letter and article there have been considerable changes. The Congress President has been invited to form the Interim Government and for the first time, the British Government have shown the idea of the amount of strain that Muslim League its proper place was being put on us at this end. They have thus given proof of their bonafides and it is now one after another leading up to for us to make or mar the future of India."

"You do not agree with my defence of Pandit Nehru. But you will please appreciate the fact that in defending him I am defending the organisation of which I am a loyal and humble soldier."

"You must have seen the resolution on which the Working Committee has passed at Wardha and I think you will agree that our President has shown great statesmanship and risen to the occasion in drafting this resolution. If he had amount of harm that has been done on a previous occasion on this subject he had made ample amends. To err is human but to accept one's error is something much greater."

**Extracts from Sardar Patel's letter dated July 29, 1946 addressed to DP M'sra about Pt. Nehru nominations to Congress Working Committee:**

"Though the President (Nehru) has been elected for the fourth time he often acts with childlike innocence which puts us all in great difficulties unexpectedly. You have Jinnah got the invitation, quite good reasons to be angry but we must not allow our anger to go. We are passing through a critical period and our life's work may either yield successful results or our hopes may all be dashed to pieces by sheer foolishness on our part and the cup which is full of nectar and which is very near our lips may drop down from our hands before we can taste even a drop of it. The situation is full of perplexities and difficulties, but on such occasions seasoned soldiers have to hold the ground and brave the tumult and storm through which the country is passing."

"He has done many things recently which have caused us great embarrassment. His action in Kashmir election to the Constituent Assembly, his Purna Conference immediately after the AICC are all acts of emotional impulsiveness and

circumstances. Opposition sometimes drives him mad as he is impatient. His present action is also the result of a burning desire to take the younger elements with him and although in doing so he has committed a grave mistake he will not hesitate to rectify it when he realises the grave injustice he has done to others and to the organisation. You may, however, rest assured that so long as one of us is inside the group that governs the policy of the Congress, the straight and steady march of the ship will not be interrupted."

**Extracts from a letter dated December 15, 1946 from Sardar Patel to Sir Stafford Cripps:**

"In my last letter I gave some idea of the amount of strain that Muslim League its proper place was being put on us at this end. Since then events have happened one after another leading up to our being invited to London for discussion. The climax was reached when Jawaharlal returned almost heart-broken."

"When the invitation came, our first instinct was to decline to accept it. But the Prime Minister's appeal and his assurance in reply to our cable created a feeling in Pandit Nehru's mind that refusal to accept the invitation may be regarded as an act of discourtesy; and he left India full of hopes for a message of good-will and sympathy, but he returned sadly disappointed. He now realises his mistake and the harm that has been done to India by his having accepted the invitation. We have full appreciation of your difficulties over there. But I must frankly confess that there is very little understanding over there of our difficulties here."

"You called the League delegation there at a time when there was some realisation that violence is a game which both parties can play and the mild Hind Jinnah has said in London immediately after the debate. He swears by Pakistan and everything conceded to him is to be used as lever to work to the end. You wish that we should agree to help him in his mad dream. I am sorry to write to you in this strain, but I feel sad over the whole affair. All of us here feel that there has been a betrayal."

"The solution has now been made more difficult, may almost be impossible. The settlement can only be made if there is no outside interference and the parties let alone. The Viceroy would not give us peace and he and his advisers are all pro-League. We have to work through them. It is an impossible situation but I do not know whether you will be able to do anything in the matter."

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प्रश्नों की  
क्रमसंख्या



गोली प्रतियों की संख्या

प्रश्न पत्र निर्माता द्वारा पूर्ति किया जाय

प्रश्नों की क्रमसंख्या

## New Volume Throws Light On Nehru-Patel Rift

Frictions and differences between Mr Nehru and Sardar Patel over matters of policy and appointments from the early days of the Interim Government have been brought to light in the fourth volume of Patel's Correspondence released in New Delhi, says PTL.

Edited by Mr Durga Das, the Correspondence also reveals serious differences between Mr Patel and Lord Wavell and the tough stand Mr Patel took with the Viceroy, who was accused of pro-Muslim League bias.

The desperate effort made by Mr Patel to stop the communal flare-up in Punjab and Bengal in early 1947 is revealed in his repeated but unsuccessful pleading with Lord Wavell to introduce martial law in the affected areas in Bengal and Punjab.

Mr Patel later took up the matter with Lord Mountbatten, who thought that a joint Gandhi-Jinnah appeal for communal amity would work a miracle. Mr Patel bluntly told Lord Mountbatten that the "signature of Mr Jinnah on the appeal is a mockery if he does not feel the urge to visit the areas (which had experienced a communal holocaust) such as Dera Ismail Khan, Rawalpindi and Multan". In contrast Mr Patel added: "Gandhi is buried in the midst of a self-imposed mission in Bihar calculated to assuage the feelings of Muslims".

### BENGAL PARTITION

Of special interest in the context of the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent republic was the division in 1947 in the ranks of the Bengal leaders, as an offshoot of the communal flare-up, on the question whether partition of the province (Bengal) could be avoided by opting for a sovereign united Bengal.

While Mr H. S. Suhrawardy threatened to burn down Calcutta if Bengal was partitioned, some top Hindu leaders arrayed themselves on the side of a sovereign Bengal. But leaders like Dr S. P. Mookerjee and Mr K. C. Neogy, favoured "partition of Bengal, Pakistan or no Pakistan".

Mr Patel in a letter to Mr Dutt Mazumdar hoped that "there will be no treachery". In another letter to Mr K. C. Neogy, Mr Patel pointed out that the "cry of sovereign independent Bengal is a trap in which even Mr Kiran Shanker

Ray may fall with Sarat Babu (Sarat Bose). The only way to save the Hindus of Bengal is to insist on partition of Bengal and to listen to nothing else. That is the only way to bring the Muslim League in Bengal to its senses".

Mr Patel added: "I am aware of the threat which Suhrawardy has given in his statement and which he may try to execute in the event of partition, but we shall take all possible precautions to prevent such a catastrophe".

### TRIANGULAR FIGHT

An interesting episode is the triangular fight between Mr Nehru, Mr Patel and Mr Krishna Menon, the then High Commissioner in London, over Mr Sudhir Ghosh, an emissary of Gandhiji, who was appointed Public Relation Officer in London in 1947.

Mr Krishna Menon and the Deputy High Commissioner, Mr M. K. Vellodi, made representations to Mr Nehru about the conduct of Mr Ghosh. Mr Ghosh, on the other hand, represented to Mr Patel about Mr Krishna Menon. Mr Menon complained to Mr Nehru that Mr Ghosh was not easily amenable to discipline of India House and this had created certain difficulties.

In a telegram dated September 26, 1947 to Mr Patel, who was also the Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Mr Menon threatened to take over the administrative direction, high-level contacts and administrative policy of the Public Relations and Information Department from October 3 the same year.

Mr Menon suggested the appointment of an Indian journalist at that time in London to the Public Relations and Information Department. Mr Menon also sent a similar telegram to Mr Nehru about the take-over.

### TELEGRAM TO MENON

Mr Patel, in a telegram to Mr Menon, dated October 7, rejected the recommendation to employ the journalist.

Meanwhile, Mr Ghosh came to India for consultations and met Mr Nehru and Mr Patel. Mr Nehru suggested to Mr Patel that Mr Ghosh should not return to London. In a letter dated November 8, Mr Nehru told Mr Patel, "It seems clear from various accounts that Mr Krishna Menon and Mr Sudhir Ghosh do not fit in with each other and it is unfair to both to

be yoked together in one place. In fact, things have come to such a pass that Mr Sudhir Ghosh can hardly go back to London without our asking Mr Menon to resign from his post."

In another letter to Mr Patel on November 13, Mr Nehru noted that if Mr Ghosh was sent back "Mr Menon could not continue. Obviously, Mr Menon has to continue there, as he has done remarkably well. The consequence is that Mr Sudhir Ghosh should not go back".

The same day Mr Menon telephoned Mr Nehru and informed him of a telegram he had received from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting informing him of Mr Ghosh's return.

### LETTER TO NEHRU

Mr Patel, in a letter on November 14, told Mr Nehru that he had arranged for Mr Sudhir's return to London, as "I felt that, quite apart from any other considerations, the presence of his wife in London made it necessary for him to return". After all, Mr Sudhir was on leave and had not been recalled by us. He is therefore entitled to return to his post. Further, unless human considerations are to be ruled out, merely because Mr Sudhir has fallen foul of Mr Krishna Menon, Mr Krishna Menon should have realized that at least the presence of his wife in London necessitates Mr Sudhir's return.

"It seems to me that the fact that Mr Krishna Menon cannot even tolerate Mr Sudhir's return from leave to London shows to what extent he has carried personal animosities".

He suggested that in view of the attitude taken by Mr Menon, Mr Sudhir should return.

Mr Nehru in a letter dated November 15 agreed with Mr Patel that it was not necessary for Mr Menon to have charge-sheeted Mr Sudhir. As charges were made Mr Ghosh had obviously to be given a chance to reply to them. "Sudhir should certainly go back to London to wind up his affairs and arrange for his wife's return. I did not know that his wife was there with him", Mr Nehru said.



इस भाग पर कुछ न लिखा जाय



## Startling disclosures

**EIGHTH VOLUME OF 'SAR-  
DAR PATEL'S CORRESPON-  
DENCE 1945-50':** Edited by  
Durga Das. Published by  
Navjvan Publishing House,  
Ahmedabad - 280014. First  
Edition December 1973. Pp.  
LXVI and 532. Price Rs. 75.

**W**E have had occasion in the past to review in these columns seven of the voluminous tomes published by the Navajivan Publishing House of Ahmedabad under the general title 'Sardar Patel's Correspondence 1945-50'.

IN this noble task, the publishers had had the benefit of the services of Mr. Durga Das, a reputed journalist, who has indeed done his best to edit these volumes with competence and great devotion. These volumes certainly carry rare historical fare concerning the momentous developments that took place in India during 1945-50—a host of eventful period in Indian History which is justly regarded as one of the most trying periods that the Indian political leaders had had to face in the post-independence era.

The volume currently under review is the eighth one in the series of ten volumes that are to be released ultimately to cover the entire correspondence of Sardar Patel that has been placed at the disposal of the publishers by Miss Maniben Patel, daughter of the late Sardar Patel. This eighth volume has incorporated as many as 499 texts of letters, statements and documents that were exchanged by Sardar Patel during the years 1945-50 with his hundreds of correspondents among whom were included such high dignitaries of those times as Pandit Nehru, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Mr. C. Rajagopalachari and some of the prominent Chief Ministers of some of the major provinces in India. The correspondence that has been included herein is very significant. It is of utmost importance to future historians of India since it relates to a period when Sardar Patel worked as Deputy Prime Minister of India (officiating at times even as Prime Minister during the absence of Pandit Nehru on his visits abroad) and also held such key portfolios in the Government of India as those of Home, States and Information and Broadcasting, and while working as such, had splendid opportunities to work for an integrated

One of the sons of Mahatma Gandhi) and Nathuram Godse (Mahatma Gandhi's assassin) on the one hand, and between Pandit Nehru, Sardar Patel and Mr C. Rajagopalachari, on the other, a move made by Ramdas Gandhi and some others which aimed at saving Godse and his accomplices from the gallows on the strange plea that Godse's and his accomplice's execution would be quite contrary to Gandhi's own considered view which were very clearly and openly voiced by him in his writings against the imposition of capital punishment in India.

most disgraceful and treasonable crime that has been committed in recent times. The whole world was shocked by it. The two prisoners have felt a high degree of regret or repentance although by age and education they were quite fitted to realise the enormity of their crime. Some sort of repentance has come from Apte but it seems belated and most inadequate attempt to atone for his crime. There is no desire or offer to make a clean breast of the case. Had there been any genuine attempt to delink himself from the past there should have been

In this connexion, the following excerpts taken from the letters of Mr. C. Rajagopalachari and Sardar Patel and from a Press Note issued by the Government of India are very significant and remarkable for their lucidity and clarity of thought and deserve reproduction here for the edification of our readers.

(1) From Mr. C Rajagapalachari's letter dated June 13 1949

It seems Ramdas is excited and is not able to restrain his anxiety to talk to condemned prisoners and convert them to the creed of non-violence and repentance. What Bapu himself was not able to do and to which he was sacrificed like a lamb led to the altar! I am surprised.

"Not only are some of our friends desirous of saving Godse for future generations but there is a regular campaign. I can see among certain hypocritical organs of the Press somehow to get the death sentence abolished in time for this purpose.

"It seems as if the benefit of rash reforms must go to the man who has done the wickedest act of modern times and murdered India herself before we give the benefit of it to others. The man is seeking the intervention of likely people for this very purpose in subtle manner. I have no doubt. His unrepentant and blustering pose in court, on one side and soft letters to Sevagram and the sons of his victim go ill together".

(2) From Sardar Patel's letter dated July 4, 1949 addressed to Mr C Rajagopalachari;

"I had a long talk with Kishorilalji when he was here and conveyed to him almost identical views as you proposed to do in your note. I told him that no sensible man would think of

### Gripping Drama

Another matter that aroused considerable interest among congressmen at that time was the selection of a suitable person to occupy the high office of the President of Free India prior to his formal election after the first Indian General Elections to be held under the new Constitution. Commenting on the prolonged correspondence that passed between Pandit Nehru, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Sardar Patel and Mr. C. Rajagopalachari on this subject, Mr. Durga Das has very significantly observed as follows in his 'Introduction to the Eighth Volume' He has very brilliantly summed up the whole episode which had threatened at one time to bring about a major split in the Congress Party:

"A gripping drama is unfolded in this volume in the exchange of letters that took place between the top four of the Congress party—C R Nehru, Patel and Rajendra Prasad—on the selection of a candidate for election as the first President of India. The correspondence was sparked off by newspaper re-

Can there be a real change. While marriage remains the ultimate objective for 99.99 per cent. of men, marriage is not merely for reasons of economic and procreation. The college paper cannot vanquish, etc. The least liberalised and price control of their products removal. 5. Individuals should be encouraged to save by raising the interest rate on bank deposits to at least 10 per cent as suggested by Dr. B. N. Mithras, former member of the Planning Commission. 6. mission but not marriage at any price. — NPA Feature Service.





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# BOOK REVIEWS FREEDOM FIGHT: AN OBJE

**INDIA'S FREEDOM MOVE-  
MENT:** By B. Shiva Rao.  
Published by Orient Long-  
man Ltd., 35 Asaf Ali Road,  
New Delhi-1. Pp 336, Price  
Rs. 35.

HISTORY is not pamphleteering but it is a passionate record of the events with a dispassionate appraisal of events and an objective analysis of men and matters of a bygone era. Very few journalists are equipped to don the mantle of a historian, a notable exception being Mr. B. Shiva Rao, publicist, freedom fighter in the true sense of the term and a recorder with a correct perspective.

In the author's own words this is an attempt at telling the story of India's freedom struggle through a number of sketches of personalities—Indian and foreign—who made significant contributions at different phases of the struggle to the achievement of the ultimate objective. These sketches do not claim to be biographically comprehensive, except in a limited sense. The focus of attention is primarily on their main activities in relation to India's freedom movement. And even in this respect the sketches are not meant to be comprehensive. Here we have them all, Gokhale and the Liberals, Mrs. Annie Besant, Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Subramania Aiyer, ES Montagu, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Ramsay MacDonald, Pandit Motilal Nehru, Sir PS Sivaswamy Aiyar, MA Jinnah, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhash Chandra Bose, Sir Stafford Cripps, President Roosevelt, Chiang Kai-shek, Lord Attlee, Lord Pethick Lawrence, C. Rajagopalachari, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, and Sir Bertram Stevens.

The sketches woven together form a potted history of a period as exciting as it was eventful. The volume demolishes the myth that freedom was won by any particular party and that there was consistency right through in the stand taken by the leaders of various groups. Freedom, in fact was won by disparate elements who worked for a common objective. Periodically this objective too underwent certain medical changes. As a painstaking reviewer has already recorded, what emerges from the study of this book is the conviction that the liberal minds in Britain and India wished to see India free and take her place as a partner on terms of equality with Britain in the Commonwealth of nations. But at various times they had to encounter opposition from within or without, from doubting Thomases on the one hand and from extremists and whole-hoggers on the other. Leaders on both sides were often overtaken by events and they themselves shifted their stand from time to time. While Annie Besant and Tilak were organising the Home Rule Movement, Mahatma Gandhi "was inclined to view immediate Home Rule for India as impracticable". But when Mrs. Besant was interned he proposed to lead a mass march to Ootacamund where she was detained in order to secure her liberation. Later he and Mrs. Besant parted company when he sponsored extra-constitutional methods to make

Alan Octavian Hume, William Wedderburn, Henry Cotton, Charles Bradlaugh and some other dedicated spirits. In the early years of this century came Keir Hardie and later Ramsay MacDonald. We had a galaxy of such persons at different stages in the British Labour Party. George Lansbury and Sir Stafford Cripps, to mention only two, after the first world war there were others, too, from Britain who materially assisted us in the fulfilment of our aspirations. Valuable help came also from the USA from a President Wilson and his advisers in the middle of the first world war; and a quarter of a century later, from President Roosevelt and his two special envoys, Colonel Louis Johnson and Mr. William Phillips. Gene and Madame Chiang Kai-shek also gave powerful support to India's demand for freedom throughout a critical period of the second world war. The author who was undoubtedly connected with the personalities and their doings recorded in this book, throws considerable light on many puzzling instances and what was then considered as quirks of history.

That Pakistan came in the wake of certain grave miscalculations made by Congress has been duly recorded. A more accommodating attitude of the Muslim League after the 1937 elections, for instance, would have spared the country its partition which many term as "vivisection". Before the elections the Congress Party, working on the assumption that a decisive majority in the Legislature was beyond its reach, had a tacit electoral understanding with the Muslim League. But after its unexpected success in the elections, with 135 seats in a House of 228, it decided to form a purely Congress Ministry. It preferred to exercise the right of forming a single-party Ministry, because that was held to be the verdict of the electorate. A coalition, it was argued by Jawaharlal Nehru and his associates, could not wreck the Constitution from within—the avowed object of a section of the Congress. A further complicating factor was Nehru's programme to win over the Muslim masses to the Congress creed.

Nehru declared immediately after the elections: "We have too long thought in terms of pacts and compromises between communal leaders and neglected the

India free

Another remarkable feature of India's freedom movement is the valuable service rendered at different stages by a long line of distinguished persons of non-Indian origin who felt a deep and genuine affection for this country. The author has done well by expressing his and his country's best appreciation of the part played by the leaders of the British Socialist movement, from Annie Besant to Clement Attlee in securing India's emancipation from foreign bondage. We are apt to forget that among those who built the Congress on sound foundations in its early years helped it in other ways were

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## Softly On A Tough Man

Sardar Patel. By L. N. Sarin (Chand, Rs 15.)  
Sardar Patel's Correspondence, Vol 3. Edited by Durga Das.  
(Navajivan, Rs 25.)No. of  
Marks

THERE is some truth in Mr Sarin's claim-cum-complaint that "in a way Patel's contributions to the building of new India were greater to (sic) those of Nehru, but the number of books published on him are (sic) so few that they can be counted on (sic) finger tips". Nehru, we are told, had a more attractive personality and so attracted more writers as an inviting subject than "the prosaic but solid personality of Patel". It is indeed a pity that more has not been written on the remarkable Sardar who served his country truly and well; it may be a greater pity that most of the current Pateliana is even more "prosaic" and far less "solid" than Sardar Patel was. Mr Sarin's devotion to Sardar Patel is not in doubt; it does not follow that his homage will enhance either his reputation as a writer or what of the Sardar as a great patriot and realist.

Mr Sarin asks the wrong questions and, usually, provides the wrong answers. The book begins: "Was Sardar Patel a politician or a statesman? Did he like a politician, look to immediate ephemeral success or aimed at permanent distant gains?" Could any question about anyone, politician or statesman, whatever the distinction between the two be more irrelevant? The trouble may be that the author started writing before he could make up his mind whether he was going to do a political biography of Patel, and perhaps there could be no other kind of biography of the man, or a history of the years before and immediately after Indian independence, or a comparative study of Nehru and Patel. This last consideration vitiates Mr Sarin's effort, which is innocent and not particularly literate. The Sardar deserved a better admirer: Nehru is free. Mr Sarin quotes the tribute paid by the Manchester Guardian to Sardar Patel at his death that he (Patel) did the greatest disservice to his country by dying when it most needed him. How true. Mr Sarin may be asking himself whether he has not done a similar disservice to the memory of Vallabhbhai Patel by writing his book.

The whole approach seems wrong. Mahatma Gandhi knew that India needed both Nehru and Patel in the years of transition from serfdom to independence. He used them both, knowing that the two devotees, equally loyal, could not be more unlike, temperamentally and otherwise. It is difficult to see what purpose is served today—since history is hardly Mr Sarin's strong point—by expatiating on the quite well known differences between Nehru and Patel. It is no revelation that Sardar Patel got on very well with the civil services: the fact remains that Nehru was even more adored by the ICS which did pretty well for itself with Nehru as Prime Minister looking after external affairs. The argument over the privy purses and princely privileges is today wholly academic after their abolition. A.C. Gardiner once wrote a beautiful essay in praise of George V; it was asked then whether it was really necessary to run down Edward VII. Today's India can remember with gratitude and admiration both Nehru and Patel, if only some writers

or journalists, or neither, will leave the public alone to contend with the Congress (R) and Congress (O). The fact is that the two entities did not exist as long as Patel was alive; it was left to Nehru's daughter to bring them into being. Mr Sarin enlightens us not at all by harping on issues that died long before both Patel and Nehru left us.

In terms of English prose the third volume of Sardar Patel's correspondence, of which there will be seven more, adds little to literature, a remark the Sardar would have brushed aside with no regrets. His political achievements were great: his letters were not. Consider this letter to Mr V. V. Giri, now President of India who had recommended the nomination of someone for the Constituent Assembly: "I know Shri N. M. Joshi since (sic) many years. He has done very good service to the cause of labour. But I do not think the Congress can take the risk of taking him in the Constituent Assembly. You know he is an open advocate of Pakistan... He is able to accommodate himself with the Communists or, perhaps, he is a Communist... Amongst the Communists also there are many able men but a golden knife cannot be used for committing suicide". The style was the man; and this letter, politically insignificant, is as characteristic of Sardar Patel as any.

Mr Durga Das is undoubtedly rendering a service to the history of our times by editing and publishing letters from and to Sardar Patel: the man from Bardoli certainly played a very important rôle in shaping today's India. The story of the interim Government of 1946 cannot be understood without some of the comments made on it by Patel at the time of its precarious existence. When the Muslim League came in, the Congress certainly needed the Sardar to contend with Liaquat Ali Khan who knew Nehru from Lucknow but now had to deal with a tougher man from Gujarat, who did not say "Pahle Aap". The contrast is again brought out. Whether the exercise is really necessary is, perhaps, another matter.

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## 34 Years After Independence:

# The Pains Of Gr

Thirty-four years after independence, India is at once exhilarating and depressing. It is exhilarating because no other people have ever in history attempted so stupendous a task—a social and economic revolution with the democratic framework. And it is depressing because its achievements continue to fall far short of its objectives. India remains not only one of the poorest countries in the world but also one of the most unjust and cruel. The caste system has lost some of its harshness and rigidity but essentially it remains intact. The Harijans cannot still draw water from the village well or visit temples in large parts of the country.

In a mixed setting like this, it is pointless to try and draw a balance-sheet. Such exercises are inevitably partisan. GIRILAL JAIN describes the Indian reality as he sees it, leaving it to the reader to draw his own conclusion.

the increased availability of medical facilities which have combined to bring down the infant mortality rate and to double the average life expectation. Similarly the sharp increase in the number of students at all levels and therefore of schools, colleges and universities accounts for the drop in educational standards. And the quality of leadership has gone down as hitherto depressed and illiterate sections of society have got politicised and have come to assert themselves. Not to speak of the political field, even the IAS and the IFS are ceasing to be elite services in that a large number of entrants come from lower middle class backgrounds.

Corruption is a cancerous growth which can devour the guts of a society with great speed. And in our case it has spread so far and, in recent years, so fast that it is now difficult to find an Indian who genuinely believes that it is still possible to curb this malady. But corruption, like tax evasion, is also an expression, however unpleasant and unwelcome, of the country moving out of social and economic stagnation into the commercial-industrial age. The importance of money has inevitably increased as other yardsticks for determining one's social status have gone into disuse.

In spite of our claims to being the inheritors of a great—and essentially spiritual—civilisation, India today is one of the harshest and cruellest societies. While the bonds are dissolving, especially in large towns and cities, new ones are not being formed. Similarly while the old institution of charity born out of and sustained by religious belief is virtually dead, the state has not yet reached a position to step in on a sufficiently big scale. It will be an exaggeration to say that

the increased availability of medical facilities which have combined to bring down the infant mortality rate and to double the average life expectation. Similarly the sharp increase in the number of students at all levels and therefore of schools, colleges and universities accounts for the drop in educational standards. And the quality of leadership has gone down as hitherto depressed and illiterate sections of society have got politicised and have come to assert themselves. Not to speak of the political field, even the IAS and the IFS are ceasing to be elite services in that a large number of entrants come from lower middle class backgrounds.

There can still be genuine differences of opinion on what in the larger and long-term national interest of promoting rapid economic growth, this end needs to be given its head to be curbed. For despite our own experience and the experience of other centrally controlled and directed economies, there are Indians who advocate that we should restrict private enterprise. But even committed leftists are no longer as convinced about the validity of their cause as they used to be. For one thing, there is hardly a controlled economy which is doing well and does not spawn the evils of corruption, shortage and black marketing generally associated with capitalism in the Marxist folklore. For another, the more we have imposed controls, the more we have promoted corruption and inefficiency—not social justice. In fact social justice has been a casualty of the regime of controls. For the poor have suffered the most as a result of the shortages which restrictions on production have unavoidably produced.

Gandhiji was thoroughly opposed to industrialisation on the Western model and believed that it was possible to build a society which was at once egalitarian and prosperous without it. Such he did not confront

tion—and as a socialist he wanted to ensure that there did not take place an undue concentration of wealth, that smaller entrepreneurs and even individual craftsmen were not squeezed out and that workers got a fair deal. Thus we have had a most progressive labour legislation, anti-monopoly laws and regulations, schemes to subsidise small-scale and cottage industries and plans to improve conditions in slums and to build tenements for weaker sections of society.

It will be ridiculous to suggest that all these efforts have proved abortive. The workers in India have not been exploited the way they were in Europe in the 19th century. Medium, small-scale and cottage industries have done fairly well as a result of the protection and help provided by the State. But basically the logic of the early stage of industrialisation has prevailed. The business class has successfully bent the laws and regulations to its advantage. Controls have led to massive corruption on the one hand and to the rise of the parallel economy on the other. Tax evasion has not only assumed colossal proportions but also become respectable. No stigma attaches to an income-tax raid any more.

Which one of these contradictory forces—a dynamic and expanding middle class and 40-45 per cent people below the poverty line, for example—will prevail in the long run? No one can possibly answer the question at this stage. But it can be said on the basis of the experience of a number of Latin American countries that if the upper class becomes parasitical, as it is likely to do if it is not exposed to the cold wind of competition, India will stagnate. The time has come for us to stop feather-bedding in

there has to be competition and intervention by the State has to be strategic rather than detailed.

Corruption, like tax evasion, is also an expression, however unpleasant and unwelcome, of the country moving out of social and economic stagnation into the commercial-industrial age.

The need to modernise agriculture is as urgent as, if not more than, the compulsion to modernise industry and the task infinitely more complicated in view of the shortage of capital, the small size of the average holding which must inhibit mechanisation, limited availability of irrigation facilities and a host of other factors. The country has done fairly well in this field. So far agricultural production has stayed a little ahead of the increase in population. But investment in agriculture will have to be greatly stepped up if this advantage is to be maintained.

The international environment is very adverse. The manifold increase in the price of oil, the world-wide recession and inflation, aid weariness and the rise of protectionism in the West have made it highly difficult for developing countries like India to cope with their economic difficulties. But essentially the challenge is internal. Effective use of our resources, material and human, can ensure that we occupy our legitimate place in the comity of nations.

In today's India harshness and cruelty have become more explicit precisely because as a society we have become more mobile, and therefore more impersonal. We are still not on the move on the American scale. We do not change jobs and residences every few years. But millions of us are moving out of the countryside and small towns into cities.

quality of leadership has gone down as depressed and illiterate sections of society have got politicised and have come to assert themselves. In addition, even the IAS and the IFS are ceasing to be elite services in that a large number of entrants come from lower middle class backgrounds.



# Aya Ram, gaya Ram, aya Ram—Ram, Ram!

Jagjivan Ram has gone through three phases: from being an outstanding leader of the Harijans (at any rate in the Gandhian fold) he came to be regarded as a leader of the Harijans; and now he is a Harijan leader and not a leader of Harijans.

**L**OOKING back into the troubled years since independence and turning to the present, one is struck by the fact that some leaders, instead of having grown, have become smaller in stature. Jagjivan Ram, who was among the tallest, looks today a politically emaciated and stunted edition of his former self. Did we in the past view him in the exaggerated manner in which politicians view themselves, or has our perspective changed?

There are men who pursue their ideals in the face of opposition and fade away or efface themselves in the process; there are others who flourish in any climate and who go to unscrupulous lengths in order to remain in the limelight. To include Jagjivan Ram in the second category would be to judge him too harshly. But one cannot help saying that he has not always adhered to his professed principles. There is a comic element in his present effort to rescue himself from oblivion—a comic element that at the same time high-

lights the tragedy that his political career represents.

He was born humble, but he had everything in him to make for exaltation. Tall, big-built and rugged, he looks distinguished

without being attractive. He is mentally agile and not lacking in wit and humour. More than that, he has the ability to handle affairs, a quality that makes him a successful administrator.

in charge of a variety of portfolios in the Union cabinet. That a man of his experience should have been pushed into the sidelines is unfortunate. But perhaps he has pushed himself into the sidelines having been his own foil or opponent in the tragedy mentioned above.

Babuji is a complex personality, combining the shrewdness and simplicity of the Bihari peasant with the suavity and urbanity of the man of the world. He can be friendly, mocking and suspicious at the same time. He is more a politician than a leader of men, always on the lookout for opportunities for personal advancement and always making careful calculations before taking a step. But a politician can be overcareful in his calculations which is another way of saying that he will make miscalculations. And Jagjivan Ram has done his calculations wrong at least twice. To stretch one's shrewdness too far is to be crafty and Jagjivan Ram is crafty enough to be foxy. It was craftiness that caused the discomfiture of Yeshwantrao Chavan. Chavan Saheb and Babuji are entirely different characters. But they have one thing in common. They know many tricks, but as in the fable knowledge of one trick alone is the best for success.

**For all his truculence, however, he does not have the make-up of a warrior. He makes fighting speeches without being a fighter.**

Twice the prime ministership eluded the grasp of Jagjivan Ram. One of the "ifs" of history is how the country would have fared if he had succeeded on either occasion. An equally fascinating "if" is how he himself would have fared if he had not left the camp of Mrs. Gandhi. If Babuji had been a little more prudent in his Aya Ram-Gaya Ram moves, there would have been less reason for him to feel embittered.

Babuji was not entirely wrong when he remarked in despair: "It will take another 1,000 years for a Harijan to rule India."

However, it should not be gotten that though, at one time he had with him an entire vote of the Harijan vote in the National Assembly, his influence with his community was somewhat exaggerated. In respect of Harijans Jagjivan Ram has gone through three phases: from being an outstanding leader of the Harijans (at any rate in the Gandhian fold) he came to be regarded as a leader of the Harijans; and now he is a Harijan leader and not a leader of Harijans.

It is difficult to think of Babuji as a spokesman of the deprived and the dispossessed. He has been associated far too long with the haves to identify himself with the have-nots and he has secured a place among the privileged that he stands in isolation from people who have been treated as the scum of the earth. He has lost caste in an inverted sense and he may be regarded as a Brahmin among Harijans or, more appropriately, a Kshatriya since he has claimed credit for India's victory in the Bangladesh war. For all his truculence, however, he does not have the make-up of a warrior. He makes fighting speeches without being a fighter. Nor does he have the philosophy of his own as a social reformer.

Since the return of Mrs. Gandhi to power, Jagjivan Ram has been a neglected figure. Even in Parliament, of which he has been so distinguished and vocal a member, he has not been a source of worry to the Treasury benches. His attempt to establish a Congress of his own after his break with Devaraj Urs is like cutting off one's nose to spite one's face. In this confused imagery it is difficult to say what or who represents the nose, though neither nose nor face seems to matter very much today.

More than a year ago, C. M. Stephen compared Babuji to a "damp squib falling into the dustbin". Though Mr. Stephen himself is hardly a squib capable of emitting sparks, Jagjivan Ram has nothing of the flak needed to wage a war with his opponents. But one may piously greet his courageous (or is it pathetic?) attempt to stage a comeback with "Ram, Ram!"

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Lord Curzon  
He gave unintentionally

FIFTY YEARS AGO

# The beginning responsible government

ON August 20, 1917, Edwin Samuel Montagu, the then Secretary of State for India, made the following declaration in the House of Commons: "The policy of His Majesty's Government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration, and the gradual development of self-governing institutions, with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire."

Today, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of this important event, what in common parlance would be called its Golden Jubilee, it would not be inappropriate to make an assessment of its place in the history of modern India, and to relate the fantastic story of how the historic announcement came to be made.

It would be no exaggeration to say that the Announcement of 1917 marks a significant turning point in the history of India under British Rule. In 1918 Montagu and Chelmsford, in their famous Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms, characterised the Announcement as "the most momentous utterance ever made in India's chequered history." Today, in retrospect, the Announcement can be seen to have signalled the passing away of one epoch and the emergence of a new one. It marked the beginning of the end of the so-called Golden Age of Bureaucracy and the initiation of a new line of constitutional development which was destined to blossom into the parliamentary government of an independent, though truncated, India.

The recognition of India as potentially a Dominion, which was implicit in the Announcement of 1917, was made explicit in 1929 by the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, when he stated, with the full authority of His Majesty's Government that the goal to which the Announcement of 1917 naturally led was Dominion Status for India. The Announcement, therefore, can be regarded as an important landmark in British Imperial history. It implicitly repudiated the old concept of 'the two empires'—"the concept that there could be, under the British flag, one form of constitutional evolution for the West and another for the East, or one for the white races and another for the non-white." It thus pointed the way to the multi-coloured Commonwealth of our times.

The fundamental flaw of the Bri-

dia, the Announcement of 1917 put an end to the policy of drift and gave a sense of purpose to the British administration in India.

The Announcement also broke the constitutional deadlock produced by the Morley-Minto Reforms, which were a culmination of the process of converting the Indian Councils into parliaments, but without introducing an iota of parliamentary government. In fact, the Morley-Minto Reforms carried the governments in India into a constitutional cul-de-sac, thereby causing, on the one hand, intense embarrassment to the British Government in India and, on the other, bitter frustration among the Indian nationalists both in and outside the Councils.

After reviewing the structure and working of these Reforms, Montagu and Chelmsford lamented: "We have at present in India neither the best of the old system nor the best of the new. Responsibility is the savour of popular government, and that savour the present councils wholly lack."

What, therefore, renders the Announcement of 1917 epoch-making is the presence therein of the blessed phrase 'responsible government'. Only eight years before, Lord Morley, when he was Secretary of State for India, had, with an air of finality, declared in the House of Lords: "If my existence, either officially or corporally, were prolonged twenty times longer than either of them is likely to be, a parliamentary system in India is not the goal to which I for one moment would aspire."

But Montagu and Chelmsford by interpreting, correctly of course, the phrase 'responsible government' in the Announcement of 1917 as signifying parliamentary government on the British model and by recommending its partial introduction in the Provinces as the first stage in the implementation of the new policy, made the establishment of the parliamentary system the goal of British rule in India.

True, the Simon Commission did not believe that responsible government was the goal at the Centre, but then its Report was consigned to the dust-bin of history, as it well deserved to be. The trouble with the Simon Commission was that it failed to gauge the strength of Indian nationalism at a time when that nationalism through the very first article of the draft constitution which was appended to the Report, the so-called Nehru Report, of the committee appointed by the All Parties' Conference in 1928, had demanded a Parliament having power to make laws for the peace, order and good government of India, with an executive responsible to that Parliament.

It was in the fitness of things that Edwin Montagu should have made the declaration of the new progressive policy of the British Government in regard to India, for no other British politician of the time had deeper sympathy with the Indian national aspirations. The formula, however, was not his but of that arch-imperialist, Curzon, whom the then American ambas-

sador to Britain aptly designated in writing to President Wilson as His Imperial Pomp.

Statesman that he was, Montagu had enough political sense to realise that any declaration of policy regarding India must include the word 'self-government'. In view of the fact that the term figured so prominently in the cocabulary of Indian nationalist politics of the time, Montagu feared that its exclusion from the proposed announcement would defeat the very purpose of making it.

The formula which he had suggested to the British War Cabinet in his memorandum of July 30, 1917, was substantially the same as the one proposed earlier by Austen Chamberlain, when the latter was Secretary of State for India. It read: "His Majesty's Government and the Government of India have in view the gradual development of free institutions in India with a view to ultimate self-government within the Empire."

This formula, however, was not acceptable to Curzon, who, like most members of the War Cabinet, disliked the term self-government. Lord Balfour, in particular, objected to the inclusion of the term in the proposed declaration because in the mouths of Englishmen 'self-government' had acquired a definite meaning, namely a parliamentary form of government, and it was unwise, according to Balfour, to graft parliamentary democracy on India.

Curzon, as the only 'expert' on India in the War Cabinet, took upon himself the task of revising the Chamberlain-Montagu formula, and it was Curzon's draft of the

Montagu to which he gave expression in his letters to Austen Chamberlain: "The Cabinet in its wisdom preferred 'responsible government' to 'self-government'. It requires a better educated man than myself to know the difference, but if it lies anywhere 'responsible government'. I should have thought, pledges one to more than 'self-government'." "For, Montagu explained, 'self-government' might mean that India was to be placed under a Hindu or Parsee dictator, but 'responsible government', I should have thought, meant that that Hindu or Parsee dictator would be responsible to some form of Parliamentary institutions."

We are thus confronted with the paradoxical situation that His Majesty's Government, by sanctioning the inclusion of the phrase 'responsible government' in the Montagu Declaration, committed themselves to self-government of the British parliamentary type as the goal of British policy in India, even though they considered such a system unsuitable for India. This is the irony of the Announcement of 1917. Truth is, indeed, stranger than fiction.

J PATROCINIO DE SOUZA

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# Mountbatten tried for a unified India

By B. K. JOSHI

LONDON, November 10.

IN a television feature recorded before his death, and due to be broadcast tomorrow night, Lord Mountbatten has defended himself against the charge that he was the man who decided to divide India.

"I did everything in my power to save India as a unity," he said.

His defence was two-fold—first, the conclusion that in his plan for the transfer of power he acted too fast and caused the partition massacres was not correct. Even Hodson, author of "The Great Divide", who went through all his papers, attested that he could not act any slower.

Secondly, Lord Mountbatten's argument was that the greatest legacy that the British could leave India was that of a unified country. "This sub-continent of many different nations and races and tongues had been unified with an overall common language. English, with an overall common legal system, with, in fact, overall defence, communications and external affairs. They were a nation."

He placed the blame for the partition of India squarely on Mr Jinnah. "I have often told the tale of how I pursued him with argument upon argument. Nothing would shake him. He was fanatical in his desire to build Pakistan as a Muslim state. The fact that he couldn't even build one state, that there had to be two, almost 1,000 miles apart, did not deter him."

Lord Mountbatten recalled how Mr Jinnah at one stage even asked him to give a land corridor between the two. He said he told Mr Jinnah, "What, a land corridor? Populated, by non-Muslims? A hostage to fortune? An invitation to war? You must be crazy."

He claimed, he even told Mr Jinnah to leave Bengal alone since "they are Bengalis first." But nothing made an impact on Mr Jinnah.

Mr Jinnah was adamant. He wanted Bengal's tea and jute to make Pakistan viable. Lord Mountbatten then told him that the two parts of Pakistan would break up in 25 years. And this was what really happened. Mr Jinnah was the man "who created the division of India, and created a division of Pakistan against all advice, against every pressure I could bring about," Lord Mountbatten said.

He also recalled how his prophecy about the break-up of the two wings of Pakistan was shared by Mr C. R. Rajagopalachari. Years later, he asked Rajaji, to give him in writing that they had discussed the subject and reached the same conclusion. Rajaji duly obliged.

The TV feature is the third programme in a series of six. It is full of Lord Mountbatten's reminiscences about how at first he tried to get out of the assignment by making all kinds of demands on the British government. This strategem, did not work since the Attlee government conceded everything he wanted.

The programme also sheds new light on his relations with Mr Jinnah and on Indian personalities and situations. Curiously, it is silent on Mr Nehru's role, presumably because whatever had to be said about it has been said.

Talking about his first encounter with Mr Jinnah, Lord Mountbatten said: "When Jinnah arrived on the fifth of April, he was in a most frigid, haughty and disdainful frame of mind. It took more than half an hour before he uttered two consecutive words together."

Lord Mountbatten sought to correct the impression that Mr Jinnah did not particularly care about him. In fact, he said, Mr Jinnah told a personal friend that "the only man I have ever been impressed with in all my life was Mountbatten. When I met him for the first time, I felt he had 'nur' (a kind of radiance)".

Explaining why Pakistani politicians and media kept on attacking him, Lord Mountbatten recalled the remarks Mr Jinnah made to one of his ADCs, who had also served him in the same capacity. "Ah, my boy, Lord Mountbatten is a big enough statesman to understand the necessity for our people to have somebody they can attack. He will understand."

Lord Mountbatten recalled Mahatma Gandhi's reaction to the plan for partition. "Don't divide India. Let Jinnah Sahib be prime minister and pick the cabinet. Let him rule India," Gandhi said. Mountbatten replied, "Well, try and get that past Congress." Which, of course, he could not.

## HOMAGE TO GANDHI

Paying homage to Gandhi, Lord Mountbatten recalled the story of the gift the Mahatma sent to Princess Elizabeth on the occasion of her engagement to Prince Philip. It was a little crocheted mac woven out of the yarn spun by Gandhi. Years later, when Lord Mountbatten arranged an exhibition of Gandhi memorabilia at the British museum, it could not be traced. At first, he thought that in keeping with his advice, it might have been sent to the Tower of London for safekeeping. But even there it could not be located. Finally, the Queen pulled it out of a drawer saying, "Oh, why didn't you ask me. I let nobody else touch that. I keep that myself."

Touching on his friendly relations with Mr Krishna Menon, Lord Mountbatten explained how he and Menon worked together to keep India in the Commonwealth. They hatched a plot to invent a new title, the head of the Commonwealth, which could be used for proclaiming Elizabeth II as queen. The British sovereign until that time had been proclaimed Emperor of India which could no longer be done since India had become a republic.

Surprisingly, Nehru and Menon, who was then the High Commissioner of India here, agreed with alacrity. It was rather more difficult to get it, funnily enough, through the British government. They did not seem to realise that it was essential to have that link, but the Queen thoroughly understood it and approved it.

It is well known that Winston Churchill was totally against the plan for giving India independence. But Lord Mountbatten, for the first time, recounted the kind of greeting he got after power had been transferred to India.

When Lord Mountbatten tried to approach Churchill at a party at Buckingham Palace in July 1948, Churchill put up his hand and said: "Dickie, stop, stop. What you did in India, it is as though you struck me across the face with a whip," and he turned his back on Lord Mountbatten and did not speak to him for several years.



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# The National Scene

## Now That He Is Gone

By SHAMLAL

MR ANTULAY'S exit from office marks the end of a sordid political extravaganza. But does it also mark the dawn of a new era of clean public life? It may serve as a warning to those whose souls have grown fat as they sit clothed in brief authority. They know now that there are limits to the dispensing of patronage which they can transgress only at their peril. Perhaps they also realise that the public can have recourse to legal redress whenever the abuse of power is so blatant as to bring into contempt the very concept of the rule of law.

### No Striking Blow

All the same it is doubtful if the outcome of this murky affair has struck a decisive blow for integrity of public life. This is because, in the final reckoning, the battle for a cleaner public life cannot be won in the courts of law. In most cases of abuse of power such evidence as can be dug out is seldom sufficient to make the charge stick. There is indeed good reason to believe that most politicians are apt to look upon the judgment, which has cut short Mr Antulay's career as chief minister of Maharashtra, as a punishment for indiscretion, not for venality. The only lesson that they are likely to draw from this freak happening is the need for greater care in covering their tracks.

It will not do to run away from the fact that the people have learnt by now to live with the stench of corruption which fills their nostrils wherever they go. In politics, as in business, most of those in a position to bend, or even subvert, the law to make a fast buck do so without a qualm. Their only fear is the danger of being found out. Mr Antulay does not feel contrite over what he has done. His only regret is that he was so dense as to have been caught in the act. The only question which troubles him is why he did not take enough care to conceal the nexus between the allocations of cement and the donations made to the trusts floated by him. He belongs to the fast growing tribe of politicians who, even as they are obsessed with power, are completely alienated from judgment. Even today Mr Nixon does not feel penitent in the least over the Watergate break-in. If he blames himself for anything it is for being such a moron as to have kept tapes of the conversations implicating him.

Thus the issue of a cleaner public life is bound up less with a stricter enforcement of the law in a situation in which cheating the law has grown into a big industry, and more with an internalisation of the values of honesty and fair play. There is no mistaking the trend towards a new permissiveness in politics, in business, in the administration and indeed in every walk of life where lobbying for special favours, dodging the law, juggling the queue and feathering one's nest are the general rule and abiding by the letter and spirit of the law is invariably the exception.

The most frightening part of the story is the increasing public acceptance of this new permissiveness. What shocks the public is no longer the spread of corruption as a way of life but the nonchalance with which the contact men, the lobbyists, the careerists and the wheeler-dealers go about their business. What incensed the people in Mr Antulay's case was not his abuse of power to swell the trust funds under his control but the sheer brazenness of the man and his I-could-not-care-less attitude. What left them

as much as the scale of the operation.

This is by no means the first time that the turn of events has dramatised the issue of corruption in public life. Nor is it for the first time that this tumour in the body politic has been diagnosed as malignant. Opinions differ only on the best method of removing it. While some regard corrupt men as the root cause of the malignancy and think that there can be no cure unless they are all hounded out of public life, others feel, with greater justice, that the root of the malady lies in the corrupting influence of institutions — the electoral system, the party machines, the tangle of controls, the proliferating bureaucracy, the spoils system and so on.

The parties need big money not only to run their campaigns but also to lubricate their machines and charge their batteries. The economy of shortages and the system of administered prices create new opportunities for making black money. The vast discretionary powers vested in the bureaucracy foster a new nexus not only between politics and business but also between business and the administration. The multi-nationals play their own part in poisoning the springs of public life. Above all, the spread of the values of consumerism induce the people to make as much money as they can, and those in a position to make a crooked rupee are increasingly tempted to do so.

### Naive Cure

In a recent address, Mr B. K. Nehru has diagnosed the source of the malignancy which by now affects every tissue of political, economic and even cultural life. If what he has said has created something of a sensation it is not because his diagnosis is based on a new series of blood or other tests but because he happens to be close to the establishment, and it is not usual for a person in his position to raise such an alarm over a malady whose seriousness those in power always seek to minimise. The problem with Mr Nehru's address is that while his diagnosis is quite sound, the cure he recommends is rather naive.

Mr Nehru assumes that once the system of direct elections is replaced by one of indirect elections — with the first tier directly elected, the panchayats in villages and ward committees in turn electing the second tier formed by zila parishads or district boards, the second in turn electing the third tier constituted by the state assemblies and the third serving as the electoral college for the Lok Sabha — there will be no place for big money in politics. There are any number of fallacies in this innocent assumption.

First, the scope for manipulation of voters in restricted electoral colleges will, if anything, be greater than in direct elections where the electorate is far too large to be bought over with the power of money. Any one who knows how huge are the sums spent in zila parishad elections in Maharashtra can have no room for illusion on this score. Secondly, elections to panchayats, by focussing on local issues and reflecting local caste and other prejudices in their crassest form, will produce at best an electoral college which, so far as electoral college or even state-level policies are concerned, is likely to have a warped outlook. Thirdly, the Lok Sabha, at fourth remove from the general electorate, will have little feel for the pulse of public opinion. Fourthly, the parties, since they will now have a crucial stake in elections at four levels, may end up by requiring more money for running their campaigns than they do today. Fifthly, the system of

proportional representation which Mr Nehru favours is apt to result in a further fragmentation of political life, making cohesive policy-making at both state and central levels almost impossible.

The second reform on which Mr Nehru seems to have set his heart is even more quixotic. Under the presidential system, the separation of powers between executive and the legislature is effective only up to a point. For a smooth running of the system both have to work in tandem. Neither in France nor in the U.S. can the chief executive hope to be effective in the face of a hostile legislature. In India the power of the legislators to blackmail the executive which worries Mr Nehru is rather limited. At least at the Centre, except for a brief period, most legislators belonging to the ruling party have owed their seats to the head of the government. They have seldom been in a position to force it to act contrary to its own judgment.

It is true that the very process of policy-making in a large country, with many conflicting interests both in the ruling party and outside, often means a balancing of various pulls and pressures. But this has nothing to do with the executives' responsibility to the legislature. Even under a system where it is no longer answerable to the Lok Sabha, the central government would have to take into full account the currents of opinion in the house. It is for nothing that all the highly-paid lobbyists in the U.S. spend most of their time canvassing the legislators rather than the President and his aides.

The other changes, constitutional or otherwise, suggested by Mr Nehru have the same flaw. They do not go to the heart of the matter. Even the fixed tenure that he suggests for the chief executive depends not so much on constitutional provisions as on the ability of the executive to remain in control of the situation as it develops. If the Gujarat government had to resign in 1974 it was not because the Constitution obliged it to do so — after all it had a crushing majority in the state assembly until the last minute — but because it was no longer master of the situation on the ground. Even a man like De Gaulle came perilously near to relinquishing office when he lost his nerve in the face of the students' revolt in 1968.

### On Solid Ground

Mr Nehru is on solid ground only when he wants all regulatory activities of the government to be carried on according to settled norms and not arbitrarily. This means nothing less than a drastic curtailment of discretionary powers and powers of patronage. Many others before him have made the same point and drawn blank. He is not likely to fare any better. This is not because the controls do not permit of a good deal of rationalisation but because so many have acquired a vested interest in the impenetrable jungle of laws, rules and regulations so that those who get lost in it have to depend on one of them for help which is available only for a consideration.

But even if all the laws were rationalised by some miracle, there would be a sufficiently large residue of discretionary powers. The economy of shortages would still be there. And so would be the lure of consumerism sustained by the life style of those who have too much money to spend. It will take more than changes in the basic law or amendments to the rules and regulations to force the rules and regulations in force to ensure a cleaner public life and nourish a new ethic.

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# Is It Later Than We Think?

By SHAMLAL

IT is later than you think. This phrase which was on the lips of many people in Britain in the months preceding the second world war aptly sums up the new mood in India today. More and more people here are beginning to feel that nothing will be done, whoever is in power, to stop the rot or buck the trend. The opposition is cut off from reality as much as the ruling party. Neither is even dimly aware that "history to be defeated may say alas but cannot help nor pardon".

The most dismal part of the process, which is coarsening the very texture of public life, is the way partisan passions are aroused to defend what is confused by both reason and morality. The primary responsibility for this rests with the party in power which sets the tone of public life. This is clear from its cynical reaction whenever events conspire to expose a scandal involving one of the leading lights of the party. Instead of purging the leadership of such elements and doing whatever it can in the interests of integrity of public life, it tries to hush up the scandal and questions the motives of those who make the exposure. Can't it see that what is relevant in an exposure of a case centering on gross abuse of official power or patronage is the reliability of the evidence bearing on it and not the motive of those who dig up the evidence? If the opposition ferrets out evidence which discredits the government, it makes it all the more imperative for the party in power to stay above board.

As it happens, some of the party leaders behave as if they can get away with whatever they do and throw all caution to the wind. It is hard to explain otherwise the recklessness of Mr Antulay while he was chief minister and the extent of support in the party he could muster until the very moment of his resignation. Such open contempt for public opinion and for any norm of integrity in public life has done more than anything else to foster the negative outlook which the party in power is so vociferous in condemning. The public is not taking to cynicism of its own free will. It is being driven to cynicism by those who think power sanctifies any action, howsoever unsavoury.

## Both Blameworthy

This is not to say that the opposition has had no part in vitiating the climate of opinion. By exploiting complex-national problems for partisan ends, opposition grounds have made their solution more difficult. And by joining hands merely to harass the government, without a common programme of their own, they are bringing into contempt the very concept of a credible alternative to the party in power. But again, if the opposition is unable to overcome its old obsession, neither is the Congress (I).

The grim results are there for all to see—a new sense of despair among the intelligentsia, a new climate of permissiveness in society at large and the spread of a grab-as-much-you-can morality. This is all the more alarming, for it is sapping public morale just when the country has the industrial infrastructure, the labour force and the skills to forge ahead, and the

only thing lacking is a polity which can summon the requisite national effort. The very fact that almost all the state governments feel it necessary to buy whole pages in newspapers to advertise what they have done betrays a lack of confidence in their ability to mobilise the people for the tasks ahead. For, there would be no need for so costly a public relations effort if they were sure that the benefits of development were being shared by all sections of the people.

This is not to say that the figures regarding the new millions of hectares brought under irrigation or the thousands of villages which have received electricity and so on are doctored. The public relations effort merely means that even what look like impressive gains on paper turn out to be modest achievements when seen in the context of a fast growing population and the consequent need for a faster rate of growth. It is the old story all over again. Great progress is being made but it is not substantial enough to prevent the spread of poverty or discontent. And whatever development is there is by no means taking place under conditions which can even remotely mobilise an all-out national effort.

## Matter For Shame

This is why the country is stuck up with a rate of growth which is among the lowest even in the developing world and a pattern of distribution which is creating new tensions in the cities as well as in the villages. The people feel demoralised not because the problems facing them are intractable but because they are not convinced that the best that can be done in the circumstances is being done. As things are, the correction can come only from the top. It is only when the party in power sets more exacting norms of conduct for itself that it will have the moral authority to demand the same from those who oppose it. It is only when it gets its own priorities right that it will be in a position to enforce the social disciplines which a faster rate, and a more equitable pattern, of growth require.

The government has some reason to complain that the agitational approach to politics dissipates public energy and frustrates all-out national effort. But while this approach is partly the result of the very dynamics of the democratic process in a country where the opposition cannot often make its due weight felt in Parliament, it is partly a consequence of the break-down of national consensus. A policy of permanent confrontation between the government and the opposition can only aggravate the problem. This is not to say that a return to a consensus approach will be easy but there is no escape from it if the gathering dangers are to be overcome. There is every reason for extending the process of consultation with opposition parties, which has been tried fitfully in the case of Assam, to other controversial issues.

In any case the party in power ought to have the honesty to see that it is promoting the very negativism it deplores by suspecting the *bona fides* of everyone who dares to criticise it. It has no reason to see paragon or malice peeping out of every headline which censures any

ruling party bigwig. It may occasionally a story seeks to nationalise a minor lapse of a state or the centre government. It may be that times a story disregards the facts of the case. But this does not y the government in questioning motives of the press as a whole. The right approach is to set record straight where the facts are garbled and to regard the y as a welcome goad to correct action where the charges prove be correct.

## Hollow Claims

The time when government declarations were taken their face value is long past. The prevailing atmosphere of hard-bitten scepticism the more bounding any affirmation by the p in power, the more hollow is likely to be the sound in public ear. The same holds good for the more or less hold good for the opposition parties. The public has not quite forgiven their sorry record during their brief tenure in office. If anything likely to carry conviction in the w situation, it is an attitude of searching self-criticism on the ft of both the party in power a the opposition, and a new real which avoids any bloated storic like the plague.

It is fatuous of the ruling party to denounce eve attempt to focus on its failures / lapses as negativism. In fact, every pointer to a failing carries y implication, if not by open spousal, a suggestion as to how it can be rectified. At the political level, the very concern expressed over the widening gulf between the Congress and the opposition is often accompanied by a nostalgia for the fifties when there was greater understanding between the two, and a plea for a return to politics of consensus. gain, the very vehemence of re resentment aroused by the spread of corruption in public life, is a case for a determined drive to safeguard the integrity of public life.

The list of issues in regard to which the so-called negative approach implies a positive suggestion for corrective action is almost endless. When people express their concern over the steady erosion of confidence in the various organs of state, aren't they imploring the government in the same breath to put an end to the process? When they condemn the spreading contempt for the rule of law on the part of those whose job it is to enforce the law, aren't they demanding greater respect for law from the powers that When the critics deplore the alarming growth of black money, a they pleading for new aust measures, a more realistic p policy and drastic action to rect the distortions in the ec resulting from the pressure mand from those who have of unaccounted money to

It may be that it is no easy to fight well-entrenched interests or bring back policies that were blown long ago. But that is for the critics to pull ches or stop reminding eminent of the many have sorely gone spreading urban chaos spreading indiscipline in of life. The negative can be blunted by positive action.



# Row over abode of prehist

By V. T. JOSHI

BHOPAL, January 31.

**A** LIVELY controversy is currently raging in archaeological circles following the claims of three noted archaeologists that Bhimbetka, a large cluster of rock-shelters and beautiful primitive paintings, 45 km from here, was the site of pre-historic civilisation more than a million years ago.

Serious doubts have been raised on the veracity of these claims, though Bhimbetka has become a draw for tourists and scholars alike. The controversy also figured at the recent national seminar organised here to mark the completion of 100 years of the discovery of rock paintings in India. In his presidential address, the joint director-general of the archaeology department of the Union government, Mr Sunder Rajan, hailed Bhimbetka as a "monument to the ancient man."

Bhimbetka is a hill in the catchment area of the Betwa river where more than 30 hills form a continuous chain of painted rock-shelters, claimed to be the biggest collection of their kind in the world. According to experts, geological studies have indicated that these hills are part of the Vindhya range.

## FASCINATING THEORY

The Bhimbetka rock-shelters were studied about a decade ago by three eminent archaeologists—Dr. V. S. Wakankar, Dr. V. N. Mishra, and Dr. S. K. Pandey. They have propounded a fascinating theory about these shelters being the dwellings of the pre-historic man. Their theory is based mainly on the discovery of what are claimed to be "pebble tools", besides skeletons, which, according to some critics, may turn out to be as untenable as the Pliocene fossil man of the U.K.

Dr. Wakankar of Ujjain University contends that since the discovery of the site a "new vista in the pre-history of India has come to light." Describing it as the "pre-historic paradise," he says that apart from a rich heritage of Indian art it has revealed a continuous (habitational) sequence since the pebble tool epoch (five lakh years to 15 lakh years old) to an era of the Gond kingdom in this area. This, according to him, seems to be the only site in India having "such a unique sequence of cultures."

Crediting its discovery mainly to Dr. Wakankar, a huge billboard put up by the central archaeological department on the Bhimbetka hill describes the shelters as the "biggest repository of pre-historic art in the country." It says: "Excavations in some of the rock-shelters reveal the history of continuous habitation here from the early Stone Age (about 100,000 years) to the end of the Stone Age (about 10,000 years). This, according to the billboard, is supported by the discovery of "artificially made stone floors and implem-entally made hand-axes, cleavers, scrapers, knives, microlithic tools like points, lunates, made of chert and

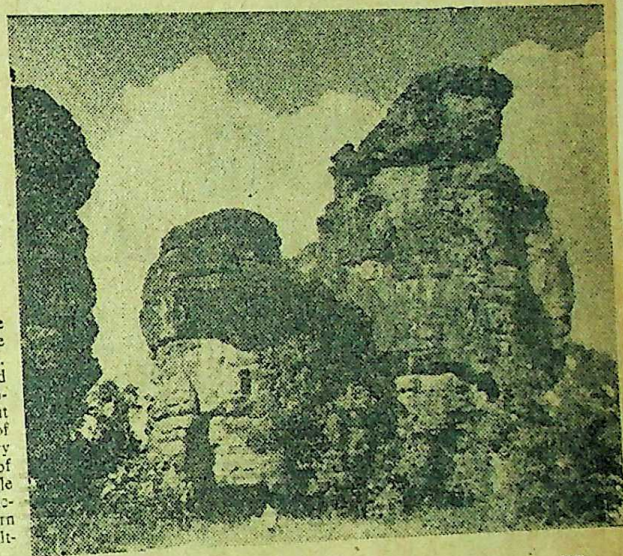
chalcedony, pieces of ochre and human burials.

"On the basis of superimpositions, subject matter and style, the paintings are divided into nine phases, the earliest being those of the mesolithic time followed by those of the chalcolithic and the historic (periods). These paintings, done with the help of thin brushes, probably made of twigs, show a myriad of animal and human figures, intricate designs, riders, royal processions, hunting and battle scenes etc...."

The view that Bhimbetka is a pre-historic site is however contested by another expert, Prof. Shankar Tiwari, who has to his credit the discovery and study of a continuous chain of similar rock-shelters on the

"that during the time-scale given by the excavators the rate of removal of the rock waste on the hill was one cm in 1,000 years. This is the minimum rate of erosion one can think of on the sloping hill surface. With the help of this, let us reconstruct the surface layers of the past. Dr. Mishra's scale will add 150 cm of deposit and Dr. Wakankar's scale 500 cm to 1,500 cm of deposit over the present-day land surface."

Because of the overlaid deposits a number of present-day surface features would disappear. With these assumptions based on simple calculations, it is evident that the first Acheulian tool maker, who is said to have deposited the tools, would have found no rock-shelter for his



A view of the Bhimbetka hill over which archeologists differ whether it was the abode of pre-historic man.

numerous hills around Bhopal in what has come to be known as the "S-belt". A professor of geography and former director of tourism, Mr Tiwari discovered a fantastic, half-a-mile-long subterranean cave in Bastar 22 years ago.

## RIVAL CONTENTION

A paper prepared by Mr Tiwari for the recent symposium was not allowed to be read out, but he was permitted to make his points briefly in a speech which, by all accounts, created a stir.

Mr Tiwari's main contention is that the sites excavated by Dr. Wakankar and others are on the slopes of the water divide on the summit of the hill. Its present surface has been formed after years of erosion. It is not the result of overlaid deposits. Thus if at all man were to live there, his dwellings should have been at least five metres above the present-day land surface and not below it. So, at any rate theoretically, the excavation must proceed "up in the air."

"Let us assume," Mr Tiwari says,

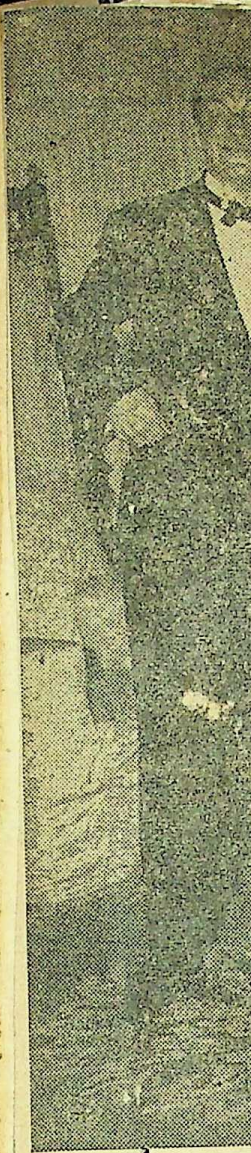
tools to deposit. Similarly, the "pebble tool" man must have found only small elongated holes he could hardly creep into.

## PEBBLE TOOLS MYSTERY

Mr Tiwari says he is at a loss to understand how a stone tool left on that original surface could find its way down below the depth of present-day surface, as claimed by the excavators. It is impossible to get habitational deposits under a natural erosional surface located at the water divide. According to him, the geological history of the area reveals that the archaeologists have excavated a "natural intra-formational deposit" of the Vindhyan sandstone, and the natural chipped stones found there have been claimed to be the tools of the Early Man. This is the reason why no evidence could be found of the use of fire; no ash heaps were traced; no hearth and kitchen debris were found; and no traces of smoke and biological remains were uncovered.

The so-called pebble tools, according to him, are only pebbles chipped by





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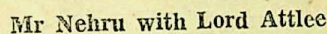
#### HITLER'S RIS

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Born in 1883, Lord Attlee was educated at Haileybury and University College, Oxford, where he obtained an honours degree in modern history, a subject in which he retained a close interest for the rest of his life. After leaving Oxford, he studied law and was called to the Inner Temple in 1905.

In 1911 he was lecturing at Ruskin College on trade unionism and trade union law. He was active in local party propaganda. From 1912 to the outbreak of World War I he was lecturer at the London School of Economics in social science and administration and resumed the work after his return to civil life.

Mr Attlee had a gallant record in the war. He was 31 when, within a few weeks of the opening of hostilities, he joined the Innies of Court.

Mr Attlee's parliamentary career began with the 1922 general election in which Labour won more seats than the Liberals and attained the status of the official Opposition. Ramsay MacDonald, returning to the House after four years' exile, was elected leader and chose Mr Attlee to be one of his private secretaries. The Parliament was shortlived.

In 1923 he became Under-Secretary of War in the first minority Labour Government and entered upon a short and uneasy tenure of office. In the 1924 elections Labour lost 41 seats, but Mr Attlee's own position was unshaken.

In 1927 he was appointed a member of the Statutory Commission on India, headed by Sir John Simon. A large part of the next two years was occupied with a study of the political problems of India. It was in these two years that he formed the conclusions that guided his later Indian policy. He was still engaged on the work of the commission at the time of the 1929 elections and for several months had no place in Mr. MacDonald's second Government.

Mr Attlee succeeded Mosely in the office of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and assisted the Prime Minister with the work of the Imperial Conference which met in London in 1930. Later, he was transferred to the Post Office.

Mr MacDonald's formation of a coalition Government in 1931 was wholly unexpected by his colleagues. Confronted with the division of opinion in the Cabinet Mr Attlee had no doubt of his personal decision, which was to remain with the party and go into opposition to the new Government. George Lansbury, the one surviving Minister of Cabinet rank, was elected leader and Mr Attlee rode the hurricane to become deputy leader. Only three weeks before the opening of the 1935 elections, Mr Lansbury resigned, and Mr Attlee became leader. He returned to Westminster with a following of 154, an increase of 102, and his leadership was confirmed.

Before long the cynical disregard by Germany and Italy of the agreement on non-intervention in Spain brought him to face the contingency of war. At the Labour Party conference in 1933, he called for an inquiry into the facts and

a steadfast believer in collective security and, almost to the end, an opposer of rearmament—to be confronted in his constituency with demonstrators who chanted in chorus: "We want peace: Attlee wants war."

The military catastrophes of the spring and early summer of 1940 compelled the formation of a National Government. Mr Chamberlain sounded the Labour leaders on their willingness to join a reconstituted Ministry. They refused to serve under him. In the Churchill Cabinet that replaced Chamberlain's Labour members agreed to work. Mr Attlee became Lord Privy Seal, Deputy Prime Minister, and a member of the small War Cabinet.

In May 1945, Mr Churchill formally proposed to him that the coalition should continue until the end of the war with Japan. The Labour Party executive turned down the proposal and the Labour members left the Government. Mr Churchill formed a caretaker Government. Parliament was dissolved on June 15 and polling took place the following month.

Labour's resounding triumph returned Mr Attlee with 393 followers, giving him an overwhelming majority in the House of Commons. He became Prime Minister at the age of 62.

His own and his Government's repudiation of Imperialism was given practical expression in the withdrawal from Egypt, and from India (involving the creation of Pakistan) and Burma, as also the surrender of the mandate for Palestine when it was found impossible to reconcile the conflicting claims of Jews and Arabs.

The economic and international problems of Britain seemed to have eased when Mr Attlee faced the electorate in February 1950. Labour's introduction of the Health Service, Family Allowances and a comprehensive system of Social Insurance gave the party confidence about the poll results. It was a great shock to it, therefore, that, while it increased its vote by more than 1.025 million, its massive majority was slashed to 10. Mr Attlee decided to continue in office. Against the general belief that he would not survive for more than a few weeks, he stayed on for 18 months. This was a period of great strain which permanently affected his health.

The mounting economic crisis also brought strains and divisions in his own Cabinet. Mr. Gautschi, now Chancellor of the Exchequer, stuck firmly by the decision to rearm and use his budget to help close the inflationary "gap" by cuts in welfare services which other Ministers resisted. During these bitter and personal disputes Mr. Attlee fell ill and had to go to hospital. He returned in time to preside over the Cabinet on the day before the Budget at which Mr. Eavan and Mr. Wilson, then President of the Board of Trade, resigned.

In the October 1951 elections Labour increased its vote by 700,000; it was larger in total than the Conservative poll. But the party lost 92 seats and control of the Commons. Mr Attlee at once tendered his resignation to the King, who conferred upon him the Order of Merit (he had been made a Privy Councillor in 1935, Companion of Honour in 1945, and a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1947) and became leader of the Opposition.

In August that year he suffered a mild stroke from which he made a complete recovery. But his relinquishment of his post as Leader of the Opposition became widely expected, but the manner in which it was done came as a surprise. On December 6, 1955 he made a typically brief and modest speech to a regular meeting of the Parliamentary Labour Party, and then slipped quietly out of a side door from the famous Committee Room No. 14 in which he had presided over many a

ance to be followed by joint  
action by Britain and France to  
restore in the Republican Govern-  
ment the right to import arms.

**HITLER'S ROSE**

Hitler's activities roused the Labour Party and Mr Attlee redefined its attitude towards war. The Government's disinclination to go to Czechoslovakia's aid—because British vital interests were not directly concerned—brought from him a vigorous rejoinder. It was a new experience for him—a zealous supporter of the no-more-war movement after World War II.

meetings. The next day an earl-  
dom was conferred upon him  
(In 1956 he was made a Knight  
of the Order of the Garter.)

• Earl Attlee later did a lot of travelling. The most notable of his visits was his leadership of a Labour Party delegation to Russia and China. He also travelled to Asia (including India), Africa and North America, attending conferences and lecturing. As time went on he dwelt more and more upon the theme of world government.

In 1961 he delivered the Azad Memorial Lectures in New Delhi.





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An IAF officer at Palam airport carries a white box containing Mr Nehru's ashes to the IAF Dakota which flew to Kashmir on Friday to scatter the ashes over Pahalgam. Mrs Indira Gandhi who accompanied the ashes in the aircraft, and Mrs Krishna Hutheesing walk behind.



Mrs Indira Gandhi handing over the nylon sleeve containing Mr Nehru's ashes to Flying Officer K. N. Shastri (in white) in the aircraft from which the ashes were scattered.





Soldiers provide a round-the-clock watch on the urn containing Mr. Nehru's ashes in the special train taking it to Allahabad.—Statesman.



# DELHI'S LAST FAREWELL TO MR. NEHRU IMMERSION AT SANGAM TODAY

FROM OUR SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE

NEW DELHI, Sunday.—To shouts of "Jawaharlal Nehru Amar Rahe" from a thousand throats, the special train taking the late Prime Minister's ashes to Allahabad steamed out of New Delhi railway station at 8-10 this morning.

**T**HOUSANDS had turned out early this morning to stand in reverential silence along the route through which the gun-carriage bearing the ashes proceeded escorted by Services personnel.

## KAMALA NEHRU'S ASHES ALSO TO BE IMMERVED

At the Sangam, the confluence of three holy rivers, part of the ashes of Kamala Nehru, wife of the late Prime Minister, will also be immersed on Monday with the ashes of Jawaharlal Nehru, reports PTL.

Mr Nehru had kept a small casket containing his wife's ashes all these years. Kamala Nehru died in 1936.

The casket is being taken by the members of the Nehru family in the special train carrying the urn of the late Prime Minister's ashes to Allahabad.

## HOMAGE TO ASHES IN MANY TOWNS

CHANDIGARH, June 7.—Three flower-bedecked jeeps each carrying an urn containing a portion of Mr Nehru's ashes left Chandigarh this morning for different places. The ashes will be immersed tomorrow in the Ghaggar, Ravi and Beas, reports PTL.

Two more urns will be taken later today to be immersed in the Sutlej, near Nangal, and in the Yamuna, a few miles from Yamunanagar.

The Statesman correspondent in Ludhiana reports: More than 100,000 people lined both sides of the road to pay their homage when the ashes were taken through the city to be immersed at Madhopur. They shouted "Pandit Nehru Amar Rahe" and showered flowers on the urn.

The Statesman correspondent in Patiala reports that more than 20,000 people paid homage to Mr Nehru when an urn was brought there on Sunday morning.

An urn was received in Simla this morning by the Lieutenant-Governor of Himachal Pradesh, Mr Bhagwan Sahay. Thousands of people, many of them in tears and sobbing, paid their homage when the urn was brought from Delhi by the State's Development Minister, Mr Hari Das.

The ashes will be taken to the five districts of the Pradesh (Mahasu, Bilaspur, Mandi, Chamba and Sirmur) tomorrow.

In the border district of Kinnaur the ashes will be scattered by an IAF plane in fields near Kalpa on June 12.

The ashes will be immersed at the Sangam tomorrow.

For the thick clusters of people who had gathered along Teen Murti Marg and the rest of the route and the throngs that waited at Connaught Circus, where the procession following the gun-carriage turned into a foot column, it was the last chance to pay respect to Mr Nehru's memory.

They did so for the most part in a devoted silence, a few sobbing with heads bowed. Many made floral offerings and the decorated gun-carriage overflowed by the time it reached the platform at the station. Now and then came shouts of "Jawaharlal Nehru Zindabad" and "Chacha Nehru Amar Rahe".

The copper urn containing the ashes was carried into the white-painted carriage of the train by Rajiv and Sanjay, Mr Nehru's grandsons, after the escort provided by the Services had given a general salute and then rested on reversed arms outside the platform.

It was placed on a raised pedestal in the carriage, enclosed by garlands, visible to all outside through the large specially fitted glasspane.

In the carriage were Mrs Indira Gandhi, her two sons and other members of the family. Also travelling to Allahabad in the train are the Vice-President, Mr Nanda and other leaders. Mr Shastri will fly there later this evening.

## HUNDREDS FILE PAST

Before the "asthi" special steamed out hundreds who had gathered at the station filed past the carriage. These included Dr Radhakrishnan, Mr Shastri, Ministers and diplomats. The President had reached the station nearly half an hour before the arrival of the urn. He went into the carriage and placed flowers on the urn.

The urn had earlier been placed on the gun-carriage by Rajiv and Sanjay after they had carried it through Prime Minister's House from the garden at the rear. A simple, dignified ceremony was held in the garden to the accompaniment of devotional songs.

The small group of people in the garden included Dr Hussain, Mr Nanda, Mr Shastri, Ministers and MPs. They stood in silence as members of Mr Nehru's staff and others knelt before the urn and showered flowers.

As Rajiv and Sanjay placed the urn on the gun-carriage, an army detachment presented arms and

the Air Force Band played a lament, "Flowers of the Field". The procession then moved, being led by the escort and three Chiefs of Staff. The entire route was lined by personnel of the three Services standing with arms reversed and heads bowed.

At the crossing of Connaught Circus and Janpath, leaders following the gun-carriage in cars alighted and walked behind it. Immediately behind the gun-carriage, in a row, walked Dr Hussain, Mr Nanda, Mr Shastri, Sheikh Abdullah and others. Thousands watched from the verandahs, roofs and other vantage points of Connaught Place, thick crowds paying their respects solemnly until the gun-carriage reached the platform.

PTI adds: The special train is being escorted by units of the three Services. The escort will provide a round-the-clock watch on the urn with four men on duty at a time, at rest with arms reversed at the four corners and facing outwards.

The train will halt at a number of places on the way and is due to reach Allahabad at 5 am tomorrow.





The gun carriage bearing Mr. Nehru's ashes to the New Delhi railway station on Sunday passing through Connaught Circus.—Statesman.



A photograph of a special 15 Paise postage stamp on Mr Nehru which will be released on June 12, the day on which the last of the ashes of the departed leader will be scattered from the air.





A member of the air crew, Flying Officer Shastri, reaching below the floor of the Dakota aircraft to drop the nylon sleeve containing Mr. Nehru's ashes over Pahalgam on Friday. The static line attaching the sleeve to the aircraft can be seen in the foreground. On being dropped from the aircraft, the sleeve unrolled, scattering the ashes.

## Nehru's Ashes Mingle With Indian Soil

"The Times of India" News Service

NEW DELHI, June 12: Jawaharlal Nehru's wish that part of his ashes should be scattered from the air over the Himalayas and the farms and fields in all States and corners of the country was fulfilled today by the Indian Air Force.

Mrs. Indira Gandhi flew in the aircraft which went to Pahalgam. Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit witnessed the scattering of the ashes over a field near Ahmednagar Fort.

The scattering of the ashes was carried out from IAF Dakotas, IL-14 and packet transport aircraft and from the S-55, Bell, Alouette and MH-4 helicopters simultaneously over 20 selected areas that represent India's variegated landscape—the low-lying plains and the snowy mountains, the woods, the sandy soil and the Deccan plateau.

Mrs. Indira Gandhi chose to be in the Dakota which carried the ashes for scattering over Pahalgam in the Kashmir valley. Attended by Gp. Capt. M. M. S. Banbet, she arrived at the Palam Air Force Station just before 7 a.m. The ashes were in a fabric sleeve enclosed in a sealed white box placed in front of a large-sized portrait of the late Prime Minister. The

seal was broken and the ashes handed over by the officiating Station Commander, Wg. Cdr. D. Bouché, to his adjutant, Sq. Ldr. K. C. Sharma, and thereafter carried aboard the aircraft in a procession which passed through two rows of 50 airmen presenting arms and officers saluting.

In this Dakota—IJ-317-S,—the late Prime Minister and members of the Nehru family had occasionally flown in the past, Air Marshal A. M. Engineer, Chief of the Air Staff, and Mrs. Krishna Humberasing, sister of the late

Continued on page 9, col. 2



(C-7)

# My c

"To India nature given immense intelligence and skill, a sense of public discipline, or devotion." — Nani Palkhivala.

by Ashok H. Desai

IT is said of Sir Birkett that he caught the attention of a jurist while reading to it a paper in the London telephone directory. Nani Palkhivala, most formidable of our advocates, can also hold the attention of the layman on a wide range of subjects, dry matters of law and to the more inspiration of India's tradition and history. He is equally absorbing speaking on inflation, the Genghis Khan of the 13th century on the level of corporate law as reaching the Kelvin scale. He has elevated his annual budgetary on the budget art and his speech on the budget itself.

This collection of speeches is woven into themes in which the author made his distinct mark: cracy, taxation, diplomacy and the law. It has been given to few lawyers have argued in so many cases that dominate the landscape. For example, the author appeared for cases relating to constitutional amendments, newspaper control and bank nationalization. It is difficult to grasp the advocacy from the word. Advocacy is per se forming art. In the Bharati the Supreme Court struck down a constitutional amendment by holding power to amend excluded the power to amend that the fundamental rights the constitution were. In November 1976, the emergency was declared by a bench of 13 judges. The Supreme Court was asked to hear the plea of the government that the decision was reversed. In an atmosphere of tension and Palkhivala persuaded after another, with subtleties and approach the plea for reconsideration. Propositions filed in the Supreme Court are book and although

We The People  
Stall, Rs. 80)



At the crack of dawn thousands appeared outside the massive gates of the Prime Minister's House to take part in the morning prayers held on the lawns within. Some 10,000 joined the prayers.

By midday a quarter of a million had filed past the copper urns containing Mr Nehru's ashes and thousands were still on the move as the sun sank behind the many windows of the neighbouring Diplomatic Enclave.

At a solemn ceremony at the Minister's House in the evening the Air Force received an order of the ashes to fulfil Mr Nehru's wish "I want these to be scattered high up in the air in an airplane and scattered from that plane over the fields where the millions of India toil so that they may mingle with the dust and become an indivisible part of India."

In the presence of Mrs Indira Gandhi, Mrs Vijayalakshmi Pandit, Mrs Krishna Hutheesingh and two grandsons, Rajiv and Arun, handed over a large casket containing the ashes to Mr Chavan, the Defence Minister. Chavan paused for a while to pay flowers to the family members of the urn and then the urn to two Group Captains of the Air Force.

A large number of officers, including the Chief of the Air Staff, Marshal Engineer, and Air Marshal Arjun Singh, snapped attention and saluted, as they passed by; an Air Force band presented arms and the casket carried by the Group Captain moved towards the foyer of the Minister's House.

Indira Gandhi again placed the urn; it was then carried across the blue-carpeted porch where a ceremony stood. Preceded by a jeep, the urn was then carried to the Air Headquarters where the ashes will be scattered by various Air Force units on June 12 over the mountains, over mountain

## NEHRU'S ASHES GIVE TO AIR FORCE

BY A STAFF REPORTER

As the capital on Saturday prepared to bid a final farewell to the remains of Jawaharlal Nehru, milling multitudes thronged the house in Teen Murti Marg where he died and the spot on the Jamuna bank where he was cremated, to pray and pay homage to the memory of the great leader.

from

Advertising



(C-7)

CONTINUATION SHEET No. ....

# My country, fair or foul

"To India nature has given immense intelligence and skill but no sense of public duty, discipline, or dedication." — Nani Palkhivala.

by Ashok H. Desai

IT is said of Sir Norman Birkett that he could hold the attention of a jury even while reading to it a page from the London telephone directory. Nani Palkhivala, the most formidable of our advocates, can also hold the undivided attention of the lay reader on a wide range of subjects from dry matters of law and economics to the more inspirational themes of India's tradition and prospects. He is equally absorbing whether speaking on inflation as the Genghis Khan of the seventies or on the level of corporate taxation as reaching the Kelvin zero. He has elevated his annual commentary on the budget to a fine art and his speech on the budget is as much of an event as the budget itself.

This collection of articles and speeches is woven round five themes in which the author has made his distinct mark viz. democracy, taxation, constitution, diplomacy and the law. It has been given to few lawyers to have argued in so many leading cases that dominate our legal landscape. For example the author appeared for citizens in cases relating to constitutional amendments, newspaper price control and bank nationalisation. It is difficult to grasp the kills of advocacy from the written word. Advocacy is perhaps a performing art. In Kesavananda Bharati the Supreme Court had struck down a constitutional amendment by holding that the power to amend could not include the power to destroy and that the fundamental features of the constitution were inviolate. In November 1976, soon after the emergency was declared, a bench of 13 judges of the Supreme Court was constituted to hear the plea of the government that the decision should be reversed. In an atmosphere charged with tension and apprehension Palkhivala persuaded one judge after another, with varying attitudes and approaches, to reject the plea for reconsideration. The propositions filed before the Supreme Court are set out in the book and although they may not



For Palkhivala, as for Justice Frankfurter, "Democracy is always a beckoning goal, not a safe harbour. For freedom is an unremitting endeavour and never a final achievement."

carry the full flavour of the argument, they are a reminder of a masterly forensic performance.

Disraeli (who was only on the threshold of a legal profession) complained that the legal mind "chiefly consists in illustrating the obvious, explaining the self-evident and expatiating on the commonplace". While the author is a debtor to his profession, his interests range far afield. The golden thread running through the book is his burning patriotism. The bulk of the volume

deals with the exhilaration and exasperation of being an Indian. With dry wit the author observes that "nature is a wonderful handicapper: to some women it gives the beauty of a Madonna and the brains of a Linnet. I am prepared to believe that this is not true of the fair sex but I am not prepared to believe that this is not true of a nation .... To India nature has given immense intelligence and skill but no sense of public duty, discipline or dedication."

The recurring theme of the book is the frustrating chasm between the potential and the reality. He has characterised fundamentalism as the besetting sin of Indians — the triumph of

letter over the spirit and the habit of paying only lip service to principle. The waste is obvious enough when one realises how much of Indian skill and initiative flourishes abroad and withers at home. The author sets out an acid test for every economic policy and legislation — how far will it bend the talent, energy and time of our people to fruitful ends instead of dissipating them.

This collection contains work spread over four decades. In a cellar containing vintage of 35 years, some wines preserve better than others. Some of the more dire predictions, fortunately, have not materialised. India does not have the highest level of political violence in Asia and Africa nor is India the sick man of Asia. (But this may well be because of greater epidemics in our neighbourhood).

The great contribution of the author has been his constant vigilance against the erosion of freedom and the degeneration of conscience at all levels.

The great contribution of the author has been his constant vigilance against the erosion of freedom and the fatty degeneration of conscience at all levels. It may be fashionable but is simplistic to place labels on his criticism and to explain it away as coming from the right. Palkhivala, for instance, has long advocated that workers should have a share in the capital of each corporation so that they may have a stake in its future. The danger to individual freedom arises as much from the size and function of the state as from the formal political or economic system. The great Leviathan itself poses the danger which requires constant checks and balance in a pluralistic society. The author has exposed as false the artificial choice between freedom and development as if less freedom could lead to greater prosperity.

This beautifully produced book touches so many areas and authors that it sorely needs an index. If occasionally the analysis is grim it is enlivened by wit. The author does not agree with William Wilberforce who would not get married because he felt that the future of the world was dark and uncertain. Palkhivala is fundamentally an optimist and his intense faith in the future of his country, dispels all his doubts. But he is bound to continue to sound his warnings. For him, as for Justice Frankfurter, "Democracy is always a beckoning goal, not a safe harbour. For freedom is an unremitting endeavour and never a final achievement."

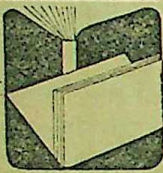
We The People: By Nani A. Palkhivala (Strand Book Stall, Rs. 80)



Those interested in the Raj both in Britain and India are in the main without any experience of it; and nostalgia is hardly an accurate description of their keen curiosity in the sort of people who ruled the Empire, the things they did and the lives they led.

by N. J. Nanporia

### Speaking Volumes

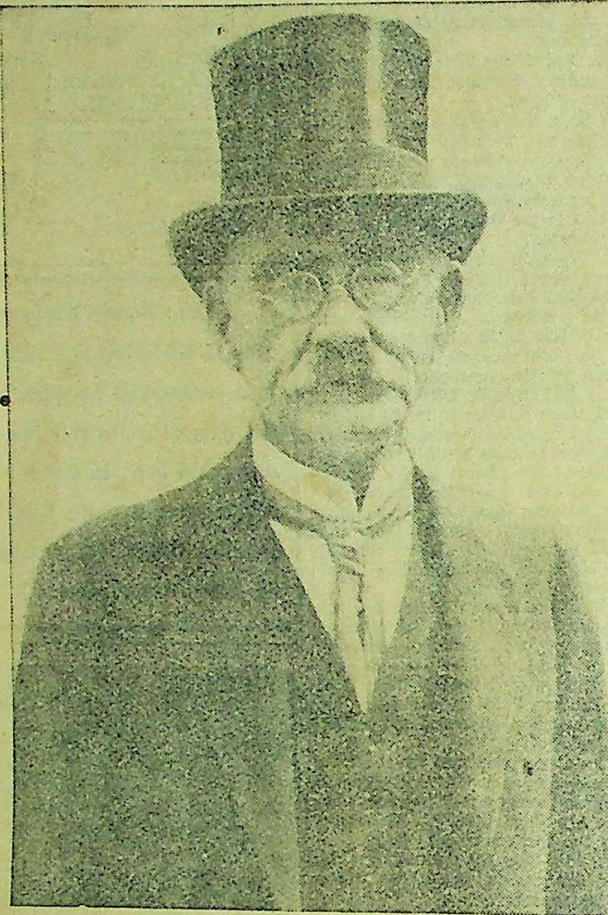


HOW to define the irresistibility of other people's letters, particularly those of the eminent? Probably the explanation is a kind of intellectual voyeurism. Anyway it is responsible for one of the most invigorating sectors of the literary scene. Among the latest in this genre is *Selected Letters of E. M. Forster*, Vol. I, 1879-1920, edited by Mary Lago and P. N. Furbank (Collins, £15.95). Of the greatest interest to us, though probably also for non-Indians, are the letters devoted to India. Among other things they contain some rather telling clues to the influences which helped to shape *A Passage to India*. Additionally, one is fascinated by Forster's first experience with the mango, his responses to Indian servants and his encounters with stiff-necked British imperialists. Not cheap but a volume worth having.

The second world war books industry continues to be as productive as ever, especially because more documentary material, so far unavailable, is now being released to researchers. *The Road to Berlin* by John Erickson (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £20), a detailed and lucid account of the German retreat in the face of Soviet military tenacity owes a great deal to documentation from the Russian side. The story is complex and many-sided, but this is one of the most readable and brilliantly controlled narratives ever to come out of the second world war.

Many rude things are said about Raj nostalgia and most of them are misplaced. Those interested in the Raj both in Britain and India are in the main without any experience of it; and nostalgia is hardly an accurate description of their keen curiosity in the sort of people who ruled the Empire, the things they did and the lives they led. *Beneath the House Flag of the P & O* by Peter Padfield (Hutchinson, £9.95) is very much

# The India Advertiser



CONTROVERSIAL SCRIBE: Rudyard Kipling.

up their specialised street, being an anecdotal account of a company whose history and activities have been inseparable from those of the Raj. The title of course is from Kipling's *The Exile's Line*. Here is social history in a highly assimilable form, on the lighter aspects of the Indo-British connection with such tit-bits of information as that the term "posh" derives from "Port out, Starboard home": a formula for locating the best cabins on the journey to and from India.

Galbraith has his faithful band of devotees, not least in India including, it is said, a customs official in Madras who has read every word the Harvard pundit has written. *The Anatomy of Power* (Hamish Hamilton, £9.95) is Galbraith's latest offering, an elegant if acerbic analysis of the mystique of power. This is an age in which there seems to be a super abundance of power at all levels, unaccompanied by the means to control it. A topical book but also a typical one. A characteristic Galbraithian observation is that those in charge of large organisations have to believe in them whereas those employed at humbler levels can retain a healthy scepticism. The best thing about a book by Galbraith is that one need not accept everything he says so imm-

ensely well. The wrathful indignation he provokes among his fellow economists is arguably his most effective selling point.

Somebody said the other day of someone else that he must be a fairly decent sort because he likes and reads Dick Francis. The non-sequitur does not quite obscure what he meant and Francis addicts will have no trouble in getting the message. *The Danger* (Michael Joseph, £7.95) is the Francis mixture as before and yet different, the stress being on kidnappings and wonderfully well managed by way of plot and characterisation. A reliable author, never letting one down when relaxation is being sought.

Something to look forward to but most unlikely to appear on Bombay's bookshop shelves is *Required Writing* (Faber, £4.95) by Philip Larkin, a collection of miscellaneous pieces that are wonderfully agreeable in an urban sort of way. Why, one wonders, do poets never seem so civilized as when they speculate about the odd subject or two in prose? Incidentally, Dick Francis is one of Larkin's favourites. Which is not surprising because Larkin is one of the most vigorous advocates of reading for fun.

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## Punjab has achieve for rabi

By Our Cor

JALANDHAR, Sukhjot Singh Sandhu, Punjab agriculture, Punjab pressed confidence will be able to a production for rabi total output of up to 92 lakh tons year's 91.8 lakh tons.

Giving results the performance including Ludhiana, Jalandhar, he told the Centre, to be small and marginal installation of tub Mr Sandhu stress should get power eight hours per day during the coming weeks.

## Baroda burn tw

BARODA, Mar police burst teargas students of the Po who set on fire Gujarat state road tion here yesterday.

A police constab of the Baroda fire jured in stone-peltin also tried to prevent fire brigade from p Buses, plying the city area, were wit incident.

The students hav for the past sever changes of branch choice.

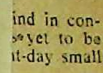
## Rajasthan to close f

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MEMORIAL SERVICE  
IN WASHINGTON

WASHINGTON, June 6.—President Lyndon Johnson, members of his Cabinet, judges of the U.S. Supreme Court and diplomatic representatives from 100 countries attended a memorial service in Washington yesterday morning for Jawaharlal Nehru, reports PTI.

Mr Ellsworth Bunker, former U.S. ambassador in New Delhi, in a tribute on the occasion said that Jawaharlal Nehru was "one of the great men of our times who gave to his country and to all mankind so much in thought, word and deed. We are all richer for his having lived amongst us".

The service was held in the Episcopal Church—the Washington Cathedral. The church was full as the service began with the hymn "Abide With Me". This was followed by the reading of Psalm 85 by the Very Rev Francis Sayre. Thereafter the Indian ambassador in the USA, Mr B. K. Nehru, recited the second chapter of the Bhagavad Gita.

The recitation from an English translation spoke of Lord Krishna's message to Arjuna on life and death and on the eternity of the soul.

Bach's anthem "Flocks in Pastures Green Abiding" was then rendered by the choir.

## PAKISTANI MISSION'S HOLIDAY

The offices of the Pakistan High Commission in India will be closed on Monday, the day on which the ashes of Mr Nehru will be immersed in the Sangham at Allahabad.—PTI.

All said, it is a searching analysis of the evergrowing historiography on a subject of abiding interest by a leading specialist. It illuminates as much as it informs.

ENGLISH HISTORICAL WRITINGS ON THE INDIAN MUTINY, 1857-59: By S. B. Chaudhuri (World Press, Calcutta, Rs. 60)

Banaras Corporation has decided to construct an auditorium with a seating capacity of 3,000 in the heart of the city as a memorial to Mr. Nehru.

The Jabalpur Municipal Corporation has suggested to the Madhya Pradesh Government that Jabalpur Agriculture University due to start next month, be named Nehru Agriculture University. It also suggested that a memorial to the late Prime Minister be erected in the city.

The Municipal Committee of Sunam in Sangrur district has decided to rename the local sports stadium as Nehru Stadium.

The Ludhiana Improvement Trust has decided to name the Clock Tower Market, now under construction, as Jawahar Market.

A joint meeting of the executive committee of the Congress Legislature Party and the Punjab PCC has been called in Chandigarh on June 14 to discuss a proposal to raise a suitable memorial to Mr Nehru.

The Special Armed Police presented a guard of honour with reversed arms.

Many along the route wept as the urn passed.

CC-0. Bhagavati Ramanuja National Reser



# STATE DIGNITARIES ATTEND CHURCH SERVICE FOR NEHRU

BY A STAFF REPORTER

A special memorial service for Mr Nehru held at the Cathedral Church of the Redemption in New Delhi on Saturday evening was attended by Dr Radhakrishnan, Dr Zakir Hussain, Mr G. L. Nanda, members of the Union Cabinet, Mrs Indira Gandhi, Mrs Vijayalakshmi Pandit and other relatives of Mr Nehru.

The large gathering included diplomats and high Government officials.

Two favourite hymns of Mahatma Gandhi, Lead Kindly Light and Abide With Me were sung. Lessons from the Wisdom of Solomon and the Sermon on the Mount were read.

A thanksgiving prayer said: "O God, who judgest the nation, we remember before Thee with grateful hearts, the steadfast devotion of men and women of our race, especially Jawaharlal Nehru, who in the day of decision, ventured much for the liberties for which we now give thanks."

## GREAT IDEALS

In his address, His Grace the Most Rev Lakshmi DeMel, the Metropolitan of India, said that Mr Nehru's ideals would seep into the millions of his countrymen. It was Mr Nehru who preserved the unity of India. He was loved more than anybody else after Mahatma Gandhi. And the late Prime Minister too had a heart bubbling with love for his countrymen.

Paying tribute to Mr Nehru's rôle in strengthening world peace, His Grace said that the late Prime Minister had realized that the world was full of conflicts. For him it was only love that could bind the nations together. "It is up to us to carry forward his task," he added.

Mr Nehru also strengthened the Commonwealth by offering a hand of friendship to Britain immediately after India became free instead of turning against the former rulers of his country, the Metropolitan said.

The special service lasting about 60 minutes ended with the national anthem.

## ASHES IN THE GANGA

SIR.—As I read Mr Nehru's will he appeared to be an English romantic poet who speaks poetry in prose. "He is," as you said as far back as March 1936, "an Indian by birth but by upbringing an Englishman." Mr Nehru's will is indeed like a song sung by Rupert Brooke:

"There shall be

In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;

A dust whom England bore.

Shaped, made aware.

Gave, once, her flowers to love,

her ways to roam.

A body of England's breathing

English air.

Washed by the rivers, blest by

suns of home."

At the back of his mind were the peasants of India who glide down the valley of life, famished and half-naked.

Sir Henry Newbolt treats poetry as a transfiguration of life heightened by the home-sickness of the spirit for a perfect world. Nehru's home-sickness may have been for beauty or permanence or even for the past. It had a connotation of plaitiveness. His will is a song of a spirit not sick but eager for a home that is the India of yore, of today and of tomorrow. To him the Ganga was a mighty river that does not stand still, a river that changes, watched by loving eyes. Much of India's history is associated with hills and dales. Mr Nehru could echo the sentiment so beautifully expressed by Brooke:

This one last gift I give: that

after men

Shall know, and later lovers,

far-removed,

Praise you, "all these were

lovely";

Say, "he loved."

—Yours, etc., PRAMATHA

CHAUDHURI.

Calcutta, June 4.

## NEHRU'S INTEREST IN CENTRAL STAFF RECALLED

The Prime Minister-designate, Mr Lal Bahadur Shastri, told a condolence meeting of the Central Government employees in New Delhi on Saturday that Mr Nehru had a soft corner for them and had always extended his ready consent to any relief and amenities meant for Central Government employees as he felt that they were under-privileged, reports PTL.

He assured the employees that the Government would try to maintain this attitude.

The meeting passed a resolution expressing profound sorrow at the death of Mr Nehru and pledged to work wholeheartedly towards building a socialist India.

Mr Menar Chand Khanna, Minister for Works and Housing, Mr S. M. Banerjee, MP, and Mr M. D. Misra, MP, also attended the meeting.

## MADRAS MEETING

The Statesman correspondent from Madras reports: A citizens' meeting convened by the Sheriff of Madras on Saturday mourned Mr Nehru's death. The State Governor, the Maharaja of Mysore, presided. A resolution adopted at the meeting described Mr Nehru as "our inspiring leader, an illustrious patriot, an apostle of world peace and the architect of modern India".

In his speech the Governor said the unity of India was Mr Nehru's passion. Like Abraham Lincoln and Mahatma Gandhi, Mr Nehru not only did great things for his own country and people, but also added in a significant measure to the very stature and solidarity of the human race. "There could be no more fitting memorial to him than a world without war."

In Bombay, more than 6,000 engineers, scientists and office staff of the Atomic Energy Department of the Government of India pledged to give their best "in humble appreciation of the confidence that Mr Nehru placed in us and the opportunity he gave for fruitful work in the service of the nation", reports PTL.

Dr H. J. Bhabha, chairman of the department, who presided, referred to Mr Nehru's contribution to the freedom fight and the country's progress after independence. He said Mr Nehru was keenly interested in science and technology because he firmly believed that the country could not progress without them.

GANGTOK: The Maharaja of Sikkim on Saturday described Mr Nehru as the "beloved friend" of Sikkim and "master" of Panch Sheel, reports PTL.

The Maharaja was presiding over the annual meeting of the Executive Committee of Sikkim Ex-Servicemen's Association.

The meeting observed a minute's silence as a mark of respect to the memory of the late Prime Minister.



# The Raj Deglorified

To Great Britain, the Raj was the El Dorado—the inexhaustible reservoir of power. The 1857 Revolt therefore produced a profound shock in the British mind. Contemporary British historians, predictably, underplayed the revolt and exaggerated the military genius of the imperialists.

by Chittabrata Palit

OF the historians of the Revolt of 1857, S. B. Chaudhuri stands out as the pioneer who spotted civil rebellions underlying the so-called Sepoy Mutiny and linked it to a tradition of civil disturbances against British rule in India. The Mutiny, thereby, became more meaningful as a broad-based primary resistance against the excesses of a century of colonial rule.

The Mutiny was stamped out.

The illusion of permanence became a reality. In the post-pacification period, the empire proclaimed paramouncy. The author has rightly diagnosed the connection between the 'Mutiny' and the 'Empire'. To Great Britain, the Raj was the El Dorado—the inexhaustible reservoir of power, pelf and pride. It was indeed a "crucial issue of British life". To the British Free Trader, retention of India was essential "to uphold the existing social structure of England". The Revolt of 1857 predictably produced a profound

shock in the British mind in contemporary times. It is yet to be absorbed by the present-day small Britain.

During the high empire, the British historians celebrated imperial survival after the 'Thermidor' by exaggerating white military genius and undermining native resistance in every way. Now that the sun has finally set on the British empire, and Britons are seeking sustenance in their past glory, a new historiography has emerged: micro-studies of regions of revolt with hair-splitting analysis of leaders and followers have been undertaken of both the military and the civil. Indian resistance has been studied in its full sweep and only stress its fissiparous tendencies. Regional, group, clan and caste loyalties have been highlighted to play up division and play down cohesion in the Indian camp.

The great revolt of 1857 derived its strength from the fact that it was the first major movement on an all-India scale

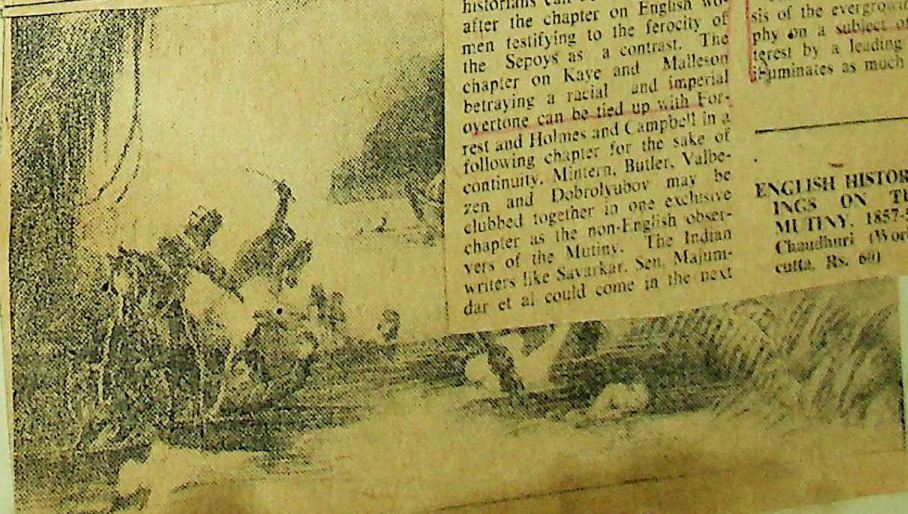
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Capture of the King of Delhi by Captain Hodson.



Massacre in the boats off Cawnpore.

forward. The chapter on military historians can be brought forward after the chapter on English women testifying to the ferocity of the Sepoys as a contrast. The chapter on Kaye and Malleon betraying a racial and imperial overtone can be tied up with Forrester and Holmes and Campbell in a rest and Holmes and Campbell in a following chapter for the sake of continuity. Mintern, Butler, Valbezen and Dobrolyubov may be clubbed together in one exclusive chapter as the non-English observers of the Mutiny. The Indian writers like Savarkar, Sen, Majumdar et al could come in the next

in his conspectus has tried to reply to some of these points.

All said, it is a searching analysis of the evergrowing historiography on a subject of abiding interest by a leading specialist. It illuminates as much as it informs.

ENGLISH HISTORICAL WRITINGS ON THE INDIAN MUTINY, 1857-59; By S. B. Chaudhuri (World Press, Calcutta, Rs. 60)



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His great-grandmother, Queen Victoria, attended his christening in 1900; the future King Edward VIII was his best man when he married Edwina Ashley, the attractive, spirited heiress to a vast fortune; and Queen Elizabeth went to his funeral after he died in one of the foulest of the IRA's many foul deeds.

His career was as spectacular as the circles he mixed in. He began World War II as a dashing destroyer captain and went on to become head of combined operations, planning daring raids into occupied Europe and laying the foundations for D-Day. Still only in his mid-40s, Mountbatten ended the war as supreme commander in South-East Asia. But greater things were still to come: he was called on to preside as the last viceroy and first governor-general when India moved to independence.

Philip Ziegler is the first biographer to have full access to the riches of the Mountbatten archives, including his personal correspondence. Although this is the official biography, it is a wholly undeceived portrait of a man who, for all the glitter, and the gold, was nothing if not human.

First Indian serial rights for the book "Mountbatten" by Philip Ziegler.

**E**DWINA was the daughter of Wilfrid Ashley, a Conservative member of parliament. More important, she was the grand-daughter of Sir Ernest Cassel, who had been born in Cologne, son of a Jewish moneylender and small-time banker. In a career as remarkable as that of any Rothschild, he battled his way to immense fortune and, through his role as private banker and financial adviser to the future Edward VII, lodged himself in the innermost temples of the establishment.

He was one of the richest and most powerful men in Europe. His wife had died in 1880 and when Edwina's mother, his beloved only child Maud, followed her in 1911, he lost much of his zest for business and, indeed, for living. Edwina became his principal interest and in 1919, when she was 17 years old, she came to live with him in Brook House, his massive mausoleum in Park Lane.

A lesser girl might have been daunted by the sombre splendours of Brook House, but Edwina was indomitable. Highly intelligent without being intellectual, elegant and vital rather than conventionally beautiful, she dazzled in London society with a fierce brilliance which alarmed some and dazzled almost all.

Her passion for the syncopated rhythms of the age reflected something deeper in her personality. In almost the only piece of verse which he is known to have written, and of which he was inordinately proud, Mountbatten apostrophised her.

*Oh female of ridiculous dimensions*

*Your proclivity for dancing is absurd*

*Though your terpsichorean effort far surpasses*

*All the animated annals of the world*

Her proclivity for dancing, for hectic pleasure, was indeed extravagant, if not absurd, and she rejoiced in the attention earned by her talents and her position as Cassel's favourite grandchild. She was one of the most sought-after girls in London.

When Mountbatten first met her at a ball at Claridge's given by Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt in October 1920 she was being vigorously wooed by the Duke of Sutherland, and Mountbatten himself was still embroiled with Audrey James, the prettiest debutante of her year. They met occasionally that winter but it was not until they were in the same party at Cowes in August 1921 that they really took notice of each other. From that moment the pace was furious. Mountbatten quickly decided that this was the girl for him; Edwina was not much slower in responding.

both in mourning prevented

to tell you that you will

tour across the United States that followed was recorded painstakingly in Mountbatten's diary. They reached Hollywood on October 18, stayed at the Fairbanks home, Pickfair, and were entertained by Charlie Chaplin. With him and Jackie Coogan they made a film: "It was fascinating work. Edwina and I are 'lovers' in it". Mountbatten's valet, Thorogood, was recruited to play the butler.

Chaplin became a lifelong friend. "He is the most loveable, and pathetic little man and yet so full of humour that he can keep one amused by the hour", Mountbatten told his mother. Shooting was frequently delayed while the amateurs tried to stop laughing at Chaplin's antics. The enterprise made nobody's repu-

waived his share in a legacy in favour of his brother.

It seemed that life could hardly hold more, yet the idyll proved more apparent than real. Once the first delights of matrimony had worn off it became evident to both of them that, though they complemented each other admirably in many, perhaps most, respects, in others they were woefully incompatible.

Restless, dissatisfied, rapacious for new experience, it is unlikely that any one man could have given Edwina all she needed. Certainly her husband proved inadequate. His failure was not solely, or even primarily, physical. Edwina rebelled fiercely against the fetters of domesticity. Mountbatten's vision of an ideal marri-

other's nerves, Edwina withdrawing ever more in angry isolation, Mountbatten baffled and reproachful. To be alone together, once a source of delight, became a peril to be avoided. Peter Murphy (a lifelong friend, whom Mountbatten had first met at Cambridge) was enlisted as something close to a third member of the marriage: an essential emollient, good humoured, tactful, fond of both parties, too intelligent to become involved in the ever more frequent rows. References to him in both their diaries are so frequent that it seems he almost took up residence in their houses.

In September 1924 the couple went to New York. Minor vexations, tolerable when Mountbatten was occupied with his

career, proved more painful when on holiday. Edwina became impatient. On the eve of their return to Britain she announced bluntly that she would not be coming. It was the first of many temporary desertions. Gossip began to spread and was embroiled busy even after her return.

Their lives diverged. When in Britain, Mountbatten more and more often stayed at Adsean (his house near Portsmouth) during the week, working or playing golf, tennis and polo with his naval cronies, while Edwina remained in London, reappearing at weekends with large house-parties. From Malta she would leave on adventurous expeditions around the globe, doing her bit as a naval officer's wife on her

# "Edwin that hea



OCCASION TO CELEBRATE: Even a peripheral member

When Lord Milford Haven (Mountbatten's father, formerly Prince Louis of Battenberg) was visiting his son in the Repulse he asked who would be staying at Dunrobin, the Duke of Sutherland's Scottish home. Mountbatten mentioned Edwina Ashley. "I've met her", said his father. "There's a really intelligent and beautiful girl. I hope you'll marry someone like her". A few days later Lord Milford Haven was dead. "You know, it's funny, and I can't explain exactly", Edwina

wrote in consolation, "but I felt all along as if it were my own loss along with yours, and am unhappy with you".

When he replied, Mountbatten told her how much his father had liked her. "So you see, Edwina, that your sympathy is all the more precious". A week later Edwina got back to Brook House to find that her grandfather had had a heart attack and had died without recovering consciousness.

Ernest Cassel left £7.5m. Brook House and £30,000 a year



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